

# It'll Be All *WRONG* On The Night

A play by Cenarth Fox

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ISBN 0 949175 61 7

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Published by FOX PLAYS  
Melbourne Australia  
[www.foxplays.com](http://www.foxplays.com)

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## **Synopsis**

*It'll Be All Wrong On The Night* is about staging a play when things don't go as planned. A nightmare for every actor, director and stage manager. An actor falls sick during the play and is replaced by an unrehearsed stagehand, sound effects don't work or do when they shouldn't, scenery is stuck, lights miscue and the theatre catches fire. Apart from that, everything runs like clockwork.

## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 2

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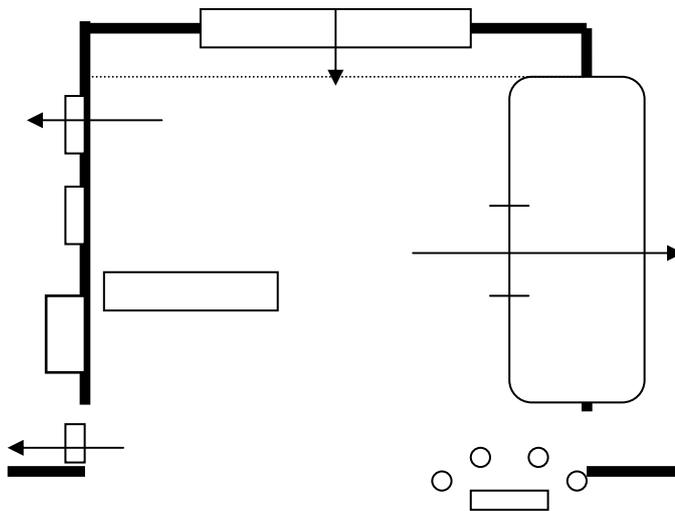
### Time and Place

The time is the present. The place is a house in an affluent suburb in a major city.

### Stage Setting

Interior of the lounge/sitting room of an expensive home. Upstage are french windows looking out to a beautiful garden. Matching glass panels are either side of the french windows. Two or three steps lead down into the room. A fireplace seldom used as the house is fully air-conditioned is RC and a large settee faces front nearby. There is a casual furniture setting DL in front of the conservatory. Pot plants and expensive furnishings decorate the room. We can see into part of a conservatory which in turn leads into a part of the garden.

Your set could look like this.



## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 3

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### Characters

JANICE (Jan) – young middle-aged, Tim's wife and stepmother to Amanda and Kirsten

TIM – older middle-aged, Jan's husband and father of Amanda and Kirsten

KIRSTEN – 20s, daughter of Tim, Amanda's older sister

AMANDA – late teens, daughter of Tim, Kirsten's sister

BRAD (Bradley) – 20s, Amanda's boyfriend

STAGEHAND – stagehand called in to play part of Bart in second act (could be Brad)

ROSA – 50+, Tim and (more recently) Jan's long-serving Spanish housekeeper

Note. The actor playing Brad could also play the stagehand playing Brad

### THE PLAY

*(Curtain rises on late Sunday summer afternoon. JAN enters conservatory from garden i.e. offstage closely followed by TIM. Both are dressed in casual clothes. They are arguing)*

**Jan** No. I've told you I won't do it. *(She fusses over indoor plants)*

**Tim** *(Following JAN)* But she's got to be told. Please Jan. The guy is bad news. He's just using her.

**Jan** She's your daughter. You tell her.

**Tim** She won't listen to me.

**Jan** Well she won't listen to her wicked stepmother. She thinks I'm the dragon from hell.

**Tim** It's not a father's thing. It has to come from a woman. And someone like you who's ....

**Jan** Who's what? Who's experienced in affairs of the heart? Someone with a impressive CV when it comes to men?

**Tim** She likes you.

**Jan** Ha!

**Tim** Okay, she's still a little distant. But I know she respects the way you've so organised. She loves the way you've got your life together.

**Jan** *(Faces him)* Tim, face the facts. Both your daughters see me as the evil bitch who broke up their parents' marriage.

**Tim** That's not true and you know it.

**Jan** The only reason they're still living at home is just to keep an eye on me to make sure I don't take you to the cleaners and pinch their big fat inheritance.

**Tim** Now that's ridiculous! We both know that is crazy.

**Jan** Even if I gave them fantastic advice, they'd reject it simply because it was me who gave it in the first place. I am not their flavour of the month.

*(ROSA enters from kitchen with vacuum cleaner. She prepares machine, starts it and vacs around the fireplace, etc.)*

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**Tim** Jan, please, this is serious. Mandy's still a kid. She's nuts about this guy and I know he's gonna hurt her. *Really* hurt her.

**Jan** Then here's your chance to play Dad. Warn him off. Tell him to get lost.

**Tim** Oh very clever. First he's a fitness fanatic and second, if I try to interfere, Mandy'll leave home just to spite me.

**Jan** But it's okay if *I* interfere?

**Tim** I don't want you to *interfere*. I want you to tell her the facts of life.

**Jan** Tim, your daughters know more about life than the two of us put together. I hate to be the one to tell you but I think they've both been round the block. Twice.

**Tim** (*Offended*) Oh yeah? And what's that supposed to mean?

**Jan** It means they're old enough to know what they want and any chats or threats or suggestions from us will have no effect at all.

**Tim** So you don't care? Is that what you're saying?

**Jan** (*Angry. Moves into lounge and DL to cane setting and magazine*) Oh give it a rest.

**Tim** (*Follows*) Jan, you married into my family. The girls are part of it. And when families hit trouble, they expect help from their own.  
(*ROSA starts vaccing in their direction. They raise their voices a little*)

**Jan** You're not listening. It's not a situation where help is needed. The only way she'll learn is by experience.

**Tim** I don't believe I'm hearing this. You want my vulnerable daughter to be used by some sleaze, some creep who's only interested in one thing. That is a bloody disgrace.

**Jan** (*Angry*) No, Tim, what's a disgrace is you putting words in my mouth, treating your daughter like a child and asking me to do the impossible. That's the disgrace. And don't shout at me.

**Tim** (*ROSA switches off machine as TIM roars*) I'm not shouting! All I'm asking is for a .....

(*Pregnant pause. Silence is deafening. Couple turn to ROSA who is not disturbed. She's used to shouting in this house*)

**Rosa** You want me to come back later when you have finished your little chat?

**Jan** (*Exiting through conservatory*) No, Rosa. You carry on. This little chat is over. (*She's gone. ROSA starts vac again and TIM calls*)

**Tim** Rosa. (*Louder*) Rosa! (*She hears and stops machine*)

**Rosa** Okay, sorry. I finish the kitchen first.

**Tim** No, forget the work. Forget it. I want to ask you something.

**Rosa** (*Doesn't understand*) I'm sorry, I don't understand.

**Tim** Rosa, please. Put that down and come over here. ... Please?  
(*He beckons and she moves down to him*)

**Rosa** You are not happy? You have lost something?

**Tim** No, your work's fine. It's always fine. This is something else. I'll be honest with you. I'm worried about Amanda.

**Rosa** (*Worried*) What has happened? Has there been an accident?

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**Tim** No, nothing like that. It's ... look, Amanda's very keen on a young man who I think is not a very nice person. I think he's told her all sorts of romantic things when really he doesn't mean them.

**Rosa** Are you talking about Brad?

**Tim** *(Shocked)* You know him?

**Rosa** Of course, he comes here all the time.

**Tim** *(Worried, staggered)* What!?! All the time?

**Rosa** He brings me flowers. He is such a nice young man.

**Tim** Flowers? What do you mean, he comes here all the time?

**Rosa** When you are at work, when you are in another city, Brad comes and stays for quite a while.

**Tim** *(Stunned)* He stays *here*? Overnight?

**Rosa** Oh no, he is not like that. He is too much like a gentleman.

**Tim** Rosa, I hate to disillusion you. Brad is not a nice person. He is a creep, a con-merchant. *(She doesn't understand)* He's a ... a Don Juan.

**Rosa** *(Laughing)* Oh no, Brad is a nice boy. You should meet him.

**Tim** I have. That's why I'm worried. He reminds me a lot of someone I knew thirty years ago. *(He means himself)* Rosa, I want you to be absolutely honest. Have you ever seen Brad being very friendly with my daughter?

**Rosa** You want me to spy on your family?

**Tim** No of course not. But Rosa, please, I'm Amanda's father. If my daughter's in danger, I need to know. Tell me, have you ever seen Brad being Don Juan in this house?

**Rosa** *(Takes her time)* Hmm. Maybe.

**Tim** Maybe? What the hell does that mean? You can't be a little bit Don Juan. Did he or didn't he?

*(French windows fly open and AMANDA enters in a hurry. She's home from shopping, coffee with friends and has a few carry bags)*

**Amanda** Hi Dad, Hi Rosa.

**Tim** *(TIM gives her small embarrassed wave)* Hi, kiddo. Been shopping I see.

**Amanda** *(Heading DR)* Just a few odds 'n ends. Fabulous day.

**Tim** Yeah. Great.

*(She heads off DR to her room. The OTHERS stop and turn to watch her. She then stops and turns back to watch them)*

**Amanda** *(Suspicious)* What's going on?

*(She moves to them tossing/dropping carry bags on settee)*

**Tim** Nothing's going on. I'm ... just having a chat with Rosa.

**Amanda** A chat with Rosa! You never chat with Rosa.

**Tim** Aw don't start that.

**Amanda** The most you've ever said is "good morning" and "is there any more toast?" Now what's going on?

**Rosa** You have been shopping, Amanda. Lots of beautiful things.

**Amanda** This is about family isn't it? You've finally twigged and now you want Rosa to confirm it.

**Tim** Amanda, give it a rest. You've got it wrong - again. I was just chatting to Rosa about ...

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**Amanda** You've always had your suspicions, Dad. Don't try and deny it. And now you've asked Rosa for proof. Well go on, Rosa. He won't like it but it's time the truth came out.

**Rosa** (*Worried. This is getting out of hand*) I am not sure what to say. I am confused.

**Tim** No, it's okay, Rosa. Amanda's right. It's time we got everything out in the open.

**Amanda** Brad is the sweetest man I've ever met and anything funny going on in this house has nothing to do with him.

**Tim** Anything funny? What are you talking about? I didn't say anything about Brad.

**Amanda** Tell him, Rosa. Tell him about the pathetic attempts at seduction going on in this very room.

**Tim** Seduction? What seduction? What d'ya mean here in this room?

**Rosa** I am not sure. This is really not my business.

**Tim** (*Angry at AMANDA*) Now that is going too far.

**Amanda** I agree. You tell him, Rosa. Every sordid little detail.

**Rosa** I have special meal to prepare. Excuse me. (*Starts to exit*)

**Tim** Just a minute. Just a minute. Rosa! (*She stops*) Please, I'd like you to return. (*Pause. ROSA returns*) Now what is this? Some kind of game? Trick the old man? (*At ROSA*) You said Brad's been playing Don Juan and that he's ...

**Amanda** Ha. That's a joke. (*Starts to leave collecting bags en route*) You tell him, Rosa. You tell him about the sex-mad hostess with the mostest. (*Turns before exiting DR*) You tell him about his wife! (*She's gone*)

**Tim** (*Stunned*) My wife!?

**Rosa** Please, sir, this is not my business.

**Tim** (*Poleaxed*) My wife was being seduced by Brad!? In this room!!

**Rosa** Amanda is, I think, how you say, jealous. She thinks something has happened when really it is nothing. Missus Gray, she is always very respectable. (*JAN, now wearing bathers enters conservatory and calls*)

**Jan** Rosa, have you seen my new towel?

**Rosa** (*Calls back*) No, madam. Sorry. (*Collects vacuum cleaner. Exiting to kitchen*) I have something on the stove. Excuse please. (*Exits UR*)

**Jan** (*Looking for towel, moves into lounge*) Well it'll be stupid asking you.

**Tim** So that's why you wouldn't speak to Amanda.

**Jan** (*Looking*) I'm looking for my new towel.

**Tim** And is that the outfit you wear for Brad?

**Jan** Oh you're not still on about that. (*Turning*) I'm going for a swim. (*Turns and exits to garden*)

**Tim** (*Going after her*) Hang on. I want a word with you. Jan. Jan! (*Exits*)  
(*Pause. French windows open and KIRSTEN enters. She hasn't gone far when she realises she's alone so goes back to the door and speaks offstage*)

**Kirsten** Come on, there's no-one here. (*Pause. BRAD appears. He's nervous*) Look, do you want to save them or not? (*She takes his hand and leads him towards settee*)

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**Brad** *(Being led)* Kirsten, I'm fine. I'll just duck back home and get changed. I'll be twenty minutes. Max.

**Kirsten** *(Dragging him DR)* Shut up and give me the jeans.

**Brad** I can't. Not here.

**Kirsten** It's grease, Brad. It needs cleaning now. Rosa'll have something in the laundry. Hand them over or do I have remove them myself?  
*(Pause. Reluctantly BRAD unbuckles his jeans and starts removing them)*

**Brad** This is not necessary you know.

**Kirsten** I disagree. I think it's absolutely essential.

**Brad** *(He has trouble with his shoes)* Look, can you help me, please?

**Kirsten** *(She does)* Of course, sir. Is there something in particular? Which area would you like me to hold?

**Brad** Oh ha bloody ha. Just take them will you?  
*(Hands them to an admiring and amused KIRSTEN)*

**Kirsten** Thank you. Now you amuse yourself while I get Rosa to work her magic. *(She exits to kitchen)*

**Brad** *(He calls)* And don't be long, Kirsten. Please.

**Kirsten** *(From door)* What about your shorts? Can I do anything with them?

**Brad** Just go will you!

*(She laughs and exits. BRAD is uncomfortable in his tee-shirt, socks and underpants. He wanders upstage and looks out the window. JAN enters conservatory still in her bathers. We can't see her but can hear her calling)*

**Jan** *(Offstage)* Just grow up, Tim. You've got Brad on the brain. *(BRAD panics and ducks downstage to crouch behind the settee)* I told you the truth. Nothing happened. Not in this room or any other room. He's always behaved impeccably. *(She enters lounge and heads towards kitchen looking for ROSA. Calls)* Rosa. *(Suddenly gets fright seeing BRAD'S head crouched low)* Brad!

**Brad** *(Remains crouched)* Oh. Hi, Jan. How are things?

**Jan** My God! You gave me a fright. What are doing down there?

**Brad** *(Flustered)* Ah, nothing. Just looking for my keys.

**Jan** *(Goes to help him)* Well I'm looking for a towel but your keys are more important.

**Brad** *(Louder to stop her getting closer)* No!

**Jan** *(She stops)* Brad! *(Worried)* Why are shouting? What's the matter?

**Brad** Nothing. I'm fine. Or will be in a few minutes.

**Jan** Listen, *(Looks back in case TIM is behind her. He's not)* Tim's got some crazy idea that you and I have been getting a little friendly.

**Brad** *(Pretending to look)* Really? Oh where are those damn keys?

**Jan** He thinks you're some kind of sex machine who's working his way through every female in this house.

**Brad** *(Laughs)* Me? A sex machine?

**Jan** Tim said every time you drop in, you drop your trousers.

**Brad** *(Still looking)* I'm sure they're here somewhere.

**Jan** Now let me help.

**Brad** No, absolutely not. *(She moves towards him so in desperation he points)* Oh there it is! *(Points to DL)*

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**Jan** (Turns to look) What? What is?  
**Brad** I think I can see your towel. Over there behind the pot plant.  
(JAN looks back suspiciously at BRAD but decides to collect her towel. As soon as her back is turned BRAD makes a dash for the kitchen. He doesn't quite make it as ROSA enters with missing towel, sees BRAD and screams. Not dramatically, more in surprise. BRAD grabs towel and holds it in front of him. JAN turns then moves back towards BRAD and a startled ROSA)

**Rosa** Brad! You gave me a fright.  
**Brad** Hi, Rosa.  
**Jan** That's my towel. (BRAD has the towel as his security blanket)  
**Brad** Great towel, Jan. Beautiful material.  
**Jan** Thanks. I was about to go for a swim so if you don't mind.  
(Holds out hand expecting towel)  
**Brad** Oh I don't think you should go swimming. It's pretty cool out there.  
**Jan** It's quite warm. What are you talking about?  
**Brad** Well Rosa thinks this towel has ah ... some grease on it. That's right isn't it, Rosa?  
**Rosa** (Confused) Yes, I have seen the grease on ... something today.  
**Brad** And I was wondering if I could borrow this towel, just for a few minutes.  
**Jan** What for? Brad, is something wrong?  
**Brad** (Sees TIM approaching via conservatory) There might be. Very soon.  
**Tim** (Enters from garden) What was that scream? (Sees BRAD) Ah, we have a visitor.  
**Brad** Mr. Grey. Hi. (Goes to raise his hand but has to grab towel)  
**Tim** The phantom philanderer. And in casual dress.  
**Jan** Brad was thinking of going for a swim.  
**Brad** (Takes a second or two to catch on) Ah, yes. (Indicates towel) Jan very generously has lent me her towel.  
**Amanda** (Enters DR) I thought I heard somebody scream! .... Brad!  
**Brad** Mandy! Hi. I just dropped in to see you and ...  
**Jan** To go for a swim.  
**Brad** And to go for a swim.  
**Tim** Well don't let us stop you. (Indicates LC) The pool's thataway.  
**Brad** Right. Um. I was wondering if I could have a cool drink. Water. Anything. I'll just duck into the kitchen. Be back in a mo.  
(BRAD starts to back into kitchen. KIRSTEN appears holding his jeans. BRAD is almost at the door)

**Kirsten** Well hello, Brad. (BRAD freezes) Care to swap?  
**Brad** Kirsten!  
**Amanda** (Grabs towel) Brad! (OTHERS react to the undressed BRAD)  
**Tim** Well I'll say this much for him, he's got balls.  
(Brief moment of panic as BRAD thinks he's exposed himself)  
**Brad** (Tries to explain) Ah, these are my new bathers and I thought I'd try them out in your pool. If that's okay.  
**Tim** No it's not okay.  
**Rosa** They don't look like bathers to me.  
**Tim** Exactly. You and your wedgies can stay outa my pool.

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**Amanda** (At KIRSTEN) What are doing with Brad's jeans?  
**Kirsten** Well I tried them on and they're not my size so I'm giving them back.  
(BRAD takes jeans and struggles to replace them)

**Rosa** You don't put on jeans over your bathers.  
**Tim** Right, I'm gunna get to the bottom of this.  
(BRAD struggles and bends over on cue with posterior to patrons)

**Jan** Nice bottom to get to.  
**Amanda** (To her sister. Insistent) How come you had Brad's jeans?  
**Kirsten** Well, sister, I just asked politely and he took them off for me. I have this effect on men.

**Amanda** (Going to attack KIRSTEN) You bitch! (The sisters scrap and ROSA tries to break them up) You keep your hands to yourself!  
**Kirsten** Mandy!  
**Rosa** (Trying to stop them) No! Please! You must stop!  
**Tim** Hey! Stop that! Hey!  
(Ad lib attempted fight with appropriate threats and pleas to desist. BRAD finishes dressing while JAN and ROSA hold the sisters apart. TIM yells.

**FX** Mobile phone rings  
Everyone talks at once. TIM'S mobile phone rings in his pocket and he answers moving DL as he speaks whilst the bun fight continues elsewhere)

**Brad** (Is bumped whilst trying to get dressed) Hey! Watch it!  
**Amanda** I'll get you for this!  
**Jan** Girls! Break it up!  
(Now the fight or almost-fight goes on. AMANDA trying to get at KIRSTEN. ROSA and JAN trying to break it up and BRAD getting bumped as he gets dressed. Each time he gets off balance he is bumped. Choreograph this well with as-lib comments from all concerned. TIM is on the phone. As his conversation builds so the fight slackens off until you have the OTHERS forgetting their dispute and concentrating completely on TIM and his phone call. A gradual well-choreographed situation)

**TIM** (Into phone) Yes? ... Yes that's me. Sorry, who are you? ... Well, were you there? Did you see what happened? ... I don't believe I'm hearing this. I did absolutely nothing. You were the one in the wrong. ... Don't you threaten me, pal. ... Listen, creep, I'll have the cops onto you so fast .... Oh that's very brave. That's really tough talk, you moron. ... Look, I've got your number, pal and I'll trace you. ... You what? (OTHERS now transfixed with TIM) If you touch a hair on their heads I'll kill you. Do you hear me!? I'll kill you, you bastard!!  
(Phone call ends. TIM is shaking. He looks at phone. OTHERS transfixed)

**Jan** Tim. What's happened?  
**Kirsten** Dad?  
**Tim** (Fuming) Can you believe that? Can you believe anyone would behave like that?  
**Jan** Like what?  
**Tim** If I get my hands on that creep, I'll ...  
**Rosa** This is terrible.  
**Tim** He's a nut case. You know that moron actually threatened me.  
**Kirsten** We can see that, you're still shaking.

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**Amanda** Dad! Tell us what happened?  
**Brad** *(Complete with jeans)* Can I help?  
**Jan** *(Taking him to settee)* Come and sit down. *(To ROSA)* Rosa, brandy, please. *(ROSA gets brandy from cabinet by fireplace)*  
**Kirsten** You look like you've seen a ghost. What the hell happened?  
**Jan** Tim, relax. Take a deep breath. *(He does)* Settle down. Drink the brandy. *(ROSA hands him brandy)* Don't gulp it. Slowly *(He drinks brandy and hands glass back to ROSA)*  
**Tim** I was driving home yesterday and got into an argument with some guy. *(OTHERS despair. TIM overreacts to other drivers)* It wasn't my fault and besides, it was absolutely nothing.  
**Jan** It doesn't look like nothing.  
**Tim** This guy was stopped in front of me at a red light. Everything's fine. He was chatting to a woman in the front seat but everything was fine.  
**Amanda** Until you gave him a serve.  
**Tim** The lights change. It's green. Time to go. But no, he ignores them. He's too busy making out with the blonde. In the meantime, I'm running late.  
**Kirsten** How many times have we told you not to stir other drivers.  
**Tim** I gave one small toot. One. A soft one. Nothing loud. Nothing long. Just, you know, "Excuse me friend, the light's green, could you please stop chatting and drive on".  
**Jan** And he gave you the finger and you lost it.  
**Tim** That's right. Exactly. He went ballistic. He abused me. Hands, language, the works.  
**Kirsten** And in return you gave him a spray which only made it worse. You'll never learn, Dad. Those guys are idiots. You'll never win with them. Leave them alone.  
**Tim** So what, I'm supposed to miss an appointment because this goose can't drive a car? Why is it my fault? I was polite. I was doing him a favour.  
**Brad** Was that the guy on the phone just now? The one in the car?  
**Tim** He's traced me, somehow. Must have got my mobile from the office.  
**Amanda** Dad, your mobile number is on every house for sale sign in five suburbs. You've even got it on that sticker on your car.  
**Jan** So what did he say? Exactly.  
**Tim** I dunno. I can't remember. *(OTHERS groan. He can. He doesn't want to think about it)*  
**Rosa** Mister Gray, let me get you another brandy.  
**Tim** *(Rises and heads DC)* No, thank you, Rosa. I'm fine. I'll just ignore him and the whole thing'll go away.  
**Kirsten** Dad, he threatened you.  
**Amanda** And you haven't told us what he said.  
**Tim** It was nothing; just the usual mindless garbage.  
**Brad** If you don't mind me saying, sir, he seems to have given you a bit of a fright.

**Tim** Yeah, but I'm a big boy and can look after myself. (*Looks outside*) I need some fresh air. (*Exits LC*)

**Jan** (*Calling*) Tim!

**Rosa** This is not like Mister Gray. He is very upset I think.

**Kirsten** Did you see him? Was I imagining it? He was literally shaking. He was genuinely upset.

**Amanda** We need to find out exactly what that creep on the phone said.

**Brad** You need to find out who he is. (*OTHERS look at him. This is family, mate*) I mean, sorry but I think you can't deal with someone who's anonymous.

**Kirsten** (*Sarcastic*) Brilliant.

**Brad** Sorry. I'm only trying to help.

**Jan** I'll talk to him. I'll just go and change.

**Brad** No, I'll go. (*OTHERS turn to BRAD*) I've done it again.

**Kirsten** You sure have. Just because we let your drop your daks, doesn't mean you're part of the family.

**Brad** Look I didn't mean it to sound like that. What I meant was, if it's okay with you, I'd like to help if I can.

**Jan** Thanks Brad. We appreciate your concern.

**Brad** Maybe it's a blokey thing.

**Amanda** Oh spare us. Now we're into male bonding.

**Brad** Well it's true. Sometimes blokes find it difficult to talk about certain things, especially to women. No offence to present company of course.

**Kirsten** You've got a cheek.

**Jan** He's got two cheeks. We just saw them.  
(*This breaks the tension and the women laugh. BRAD, who likes the fact that the women are discussing his body, pretends otherwise and objects albeit in a restrained manner*)

**Brad** Ah, please, can we drop the underpants bit.  
(*More laughter and stirring at unintentional pun. BRAD mock despair*)

**Jan** Brad, despite being a mere male, you're probably right. Tim is Mister Independence. He'll rarely admit he needs help and certainly not to a bunch of females. So, young man, you're elected. Go find the boss and do your male bonding routine.

**Kirsten** And don't get him excited. Just find out exactly what happened.

**Brad** (*Exiting after TIM*) Can do. Won't be long.

**Amanda** Talk about a backflip. When I came home just now, Dad was grilling Rosa about Brad the seducer.

**Rosa** Nobody was grilling.

**Kirsten** I hope you put him right, Rosa. It's Mandy who's been seducing Brad.  
(*AMANDA whacks – gently – her sister*) Ow!

**Amanda** I want words with you.

**Rosa** Can I make some coffee? (*OTHERS all agree*)

**Jan** You can, Rosa. Strong and black.  
(*They all head to kitchen*)

**Kirsten** Thanks for helping with Brad's jeans, Rosa. We must try that routine again.

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**Amanda** Yeah, over your dead body.  
**Jan** Any of your chocolate slice left, Rosa?  
*(They are gone. The last one or two lines could be delivered offstage. Room is empty. Pause. TIM speaks offstage)*

**Tim** Come inside. Just make sure the females have taken flight. *(TIM enters conservatory followed by BRAD)* Yeah, we're alone. Fancy a beer?

**Brad** Ah, thanks, not just now. *(TIM stops)*

**Tim** You sure?

**Brad** Later maybe.

**Tim** *(Heads to chair DL)* Yeah, you're right. Must keep a clear head. Grab a pew.

**Brad** *(Joins him DL)* And you say this guy actually threatened to hurt Kirsten and Mandy.

**Tim** Shhh. Keep it down. For God's sake don't let 'em hear you.

**Brad** But how did he know you had two daughters? And their names?

**Tim** He's a nutter, he's obsessed. They find out your personal details then use it to scare you. That's how they get their kicks. And to be honest, he's got me shitting bricks.

**Brad** Look, Mr. Gray, if it's that serious ....

**Tim** Tim. Call me Tim.

**Brad** *(Slight pause. Boy, things have changed)* Ah, Tim, look I reckon you have to call the cops.

**Tim** Don't be stupid. What can they do? The guy's a loony. He's all talk. He's done his thing, now he'll forget it. If I ignore him, he'll go away.

**Brad** You hope.

**Tim** *(Pause. More serious)* Yeah, I hope. God, Brad, some of the things he said he'd do. He knows my name, where I live, my daughters' names, my wife's name.

**Brad** You've gotta go to the police.

**Tim** Oh yeah. I'm gunna look real stupid. I didn't get his name or his number. I've got a vague description of the car and it mightn't have even been his. I can remember more about his bird.

**Brad** Well let's try and figure this logically. He knows about you and your family. He knows your number and where you live.

**Tim** He even knows my damn mobile.

**FX** *Mobile rings.*  
*The men look at one another. TIM takes out phone, looks at it)*

**Brad** Is there some way we can record this? *(TIM shakes his head)* How about a trace? Is there another phone?

**Tim** Over there. *(BRAD crosses to RC and grabs phone)*

**Brad** What do I do?

**Tim** Dunno. Just wait till I get him talking then call emergency.

**Brad** Okay. Go.  
*(TIM takes breath, hits button which stops phone ringing then speaks into it)*

**Tim** Hello? *(Pause then relief)* Patrick! Great to hear from you. *(Patrick is thrown by this. So is BRAD who realises it's okay and crosses back to TIM)*  
No, I'm just delighted to hear from you. How'd the inspection go? ... Great, that's fantastic. ... Okay, fine. That's good. Thanks for letting me know. ... Yep, you did well. We'll talk it over Tuesday. See ya.  
*(TIM pockets his phone)*

**Brad** Obviously not the moron with the mouth.

**Tim** Just one of my sales reps. We've got this fabulous property on auction next week. If the buyers are genuine, we'll set a new record.

**Brad** Sounds like the real estate market is going well.

**Tim** Unpredictable, as always. But I'm doing okay. What about you? What's your line of business? Apart from seducing women?

**Brad** I can explain that. The car was sounding a bit rough so I stopped and had a look. Stupidly I got grease on my hands and even more stupidly on my jeans.

**Tim** *(Smiling)* It's a good move that. *(BRAD ignores this)*

**Brad** Kirsten arrived just after I got here, dragged me inside saying Rosa could fix the grease.

**Tim** I pulled that stunt about 30 years ago driving an MG. Worked a charm as I remember. Nice body. Nice car too.

**Brad** You wouldn't be winding me up?

**Tim** *(Giving advice)* But the secret's in having no-one at home. I mean you've got your strides off without any fuss, well done, but then you've found yourself surrounded by extras. And not just anyone. In fact her old man. I mean that, Brad, is a definite no-no.

**Brad** *(Very uncertain)* Ah, look Tim, I have to tell you I'm not real sure what's going on here.

**Tim** I'm giving advice. You don't have to take it but old Oscar once said something like "The trouble with youth is it's wasted on the young".

**Brad** Are you telling me how to seduce your daughter?

**Tim** One thing to remember, Brad. If a bloke gets nasty or real inquisitive about his wife or daughter's friends, especially a prospective son-in-law, it's because that bloke's got something to hide.

**Brad** I think I'm gonna need a translation on that.

**Tim** The friendly, trusting father is a man without a past.

**Brad** Right. Gotcha. *(He hasn't but doesn't know how to answer)*

**Tim** So now we've got that cleared up, let's talk about you. Have I got this right? You're currently Amanda's boyfriend but as a fallback position, you're keeping your hand in with both Kirsten and Jan.

**Brad** *(Back to being upset)* Aw now that's not fair. If it hadn't been for the car sounding crook none of this would've happened.

**Tim** What about Rosa?

**Brad** Rosa?

**Tim** She on the list as well?

**Brad** *(Upset, rises)* Bloody hell, I didn't come here to be insulted and accused of something I didn't do.

**Tim** Sit down, sit down. *(Pause. BRAD sits)* Take no notice. I'm only jealous.

**Brad** Jealous?

**Tim** Yeah. It comes from being middle-aged, twice married and the father of daughters.

**Brad** (*Uncertain*) Ah, I'm back on the not sure what to say routine.

**Tim** Listen Brad, many years ago, we won't mention how many, I was young and hormonally active just like you. I could've written a book on chatting up women. Chapter and verse. So don't start any of this "I got some grease on my jeans" crap. It just won't wash.

**Brad** Well it did actually. (*Indicating spotless attire*) See.

**Tim** Good one. Sense of humour, very important. (*Changes tack*) Look I know I've been carrying on a bit. Having a go at you one minute and now doing the old mate routine the next, but it's that damn phone call.

**Brad** I'd be upset too.

**Tim** Funny though. If that moron hadn't rung, I'd probably be giving you the third degree about chasing my wife and daughters. (*BRAD starts to protest*) Just kidding. Keep your shirt on. You're really a nice guy and I know you're only interested in Mandy,

**Brad** I am, for sure. She's great. And she thinks the world of you.

**Tim** Woah! Now it's grease the old man routine.

**Brad** No, I'm serious. She often talks about her fantastic father.

**Tim** (*Serious*) Who's so fantastic he attracts some nut case who wants to attack his wife and daughters.

**Brad** Look, how about I call in at the local police station on my way home. At least they'll know about what's happened and can maybe send a patrol car round - just to keep an eye on things.

**Tim** (*Extends hand and they shake*) Thanks. I appreciate it.

**Brad** It's not much but at least you'll sleep better knowing the cops are out there in case anything happens.

**Tim** I should've known my daughter would only go out with a decent bloke. (*They laugh*)

**Brad** Now who's doing the greasing? (*They laugh again*)

**Tim** You know there's no training, no self-help stuff for so many of life's little experiences.

**Brad** Sorry, you've lost me again.

**Tim** Well take us, now. You're a young bloke trying to get to know the father of a young woman you're pretty keen on. I'm the middle-aged father checking out the young bloke taking out the daughter.

**Brad** I think we're okay. Once we sorted out a few things.

**Tim** Yeah but how do we know how to behave? What are the rules? Where are the tips? Where can you learn how to handle these situations?

**Brad** You mean a night school class on how to win over prospective fathers-in-law.

**Tim** Exactly. How to impress the father of your bird. (*They both like this and are amused*) I mean you can study anything today. Play the flute, learn Chinese, write a novel ...

**Brad** Repair your car's engine.

**Tim** Without getting grease on your clothes. (*More laughter*) But where's the course on chatting to your daughter's boyfriend?

**Brad** I guess there isn't one.

**Tim** I mean I could really stuff up your relationship with Mandy. I'm new to this caper, meeting my daughter's fella. So Kirsten or Mandy bring home their new bloke. What do I do? What do I say? Nobody's told me about this. I'm ignorant. And is there a different way of behaving if you've got a son and he brings home his girlfriend?

**Brad** Or his boyfriend.

**Tim** What? Oh God. It's hard enough as it is, don't complicate things.

**Brad** So does this mean you're about to start a business on human relationships?

**Tim** Ha! That'll be the day. But just imagine the catalogue for the local adult education classes. (*Pretends to announce/read title*) How to hit it off with your children's sexual partners. (*Pause. Slight embarrassment*) Ah potential sexual partners. (*They laugh*)

**Brad** Or, How to Behave with your partner's parents. (*They laugh*)  
(*UR door opens and AMANDA appears. She watches then beckons to KIRSTEN and JAN who silently enter and watch*)

**Tim** How to behave when a hoon taunts you in his car.

**Brad** Was that taunts or toots? (*More Laughter*) And How to get a woman to remove your clothing. (*More laughter*)

**Tim** How to make a complete idiot of yourself in front of your own family. (*More laughter*)

**Brad** How to behave in a suave and sophisticated fashion with your elders.

**Tim** How to stay hip and cool with the younger generation.

**Jan** How to act macho and be one of the boys.  
(*Women laugh and move DL. Men turn and face the women*)

**Tim** Ladies, come and join us. Brad and I were just discussing a few home truths.

**Amanda** Talk about hypocrites. You men are unbelievable.

**Brad** Aw come on. (*BRAD coughs*) That's not fair.

**Kirsten** Half an hour ago, Dad, you had Brad deflowering your darling daughter. Now he's the son you never had.

**Tim** I'll ignore all of that. Brad and I were simply having a free and frank exchange of views.

**Jan** You were being blokey, Tim. You were being macho. Now go and change your shirt. We're due next door for drinks.

**Tim** Oh no, do we have to?

**Jan** We promised we'd inspect the new painting.

**Tim** (*Exits towards DR*) Bliss. Catch you next time, Brad.

**Brad** Yeah, sure thing, Tim.

**Women** Tim!?

**Amanda** You're calling my father, Tim?

**Brad** He asked me too. (*Slight cough*)

**Kirsten** I suppose you were boasting about the grease on the trousers routine.

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**Jan** Let's give that one a rest. Now I've gotta go. Our neighbour is an art collector and loves showing off her latest acquisition.

**Amanda** She's not a collector, she's a snob. She knows nothing about art and buys paintings just to flaunt her excessive wealth.

**Brad** You mean she's really loaded?

**Kirsten** As Grandpa used to say, she's as rich as creosote.

**Brad** Don't 'spose she's got a daughter? Maybe I should be in next door.  
*(AMANDA goes to whack/prod him)*

**Jan** No such luck. Just a fabulous house full of valuable paintings.

**Kirsten** Plus the most sophisticated alarm system money can buy. So don't get any ideas.

**Jan** Tim and I won't be long. I hope you'll stay for tea, Brad. Especially now you and Tim are bosom buddies. *(Sisters laugh)*

**Brad** Thanks but Mandy and I thought we'd eat out tonight.

**Kirsten** Eat out? You'd pass on one of Rosa's Sunday roasts?

**Amanda** Don't listen to her. Sunday night is Rosa's night off and we suffer one of Dad's infamous barbecues.

**Brad** Well I'm easy but ...

**Kirsten** We know that. We've seen the shorts.

**Brad** I am never listening to you again.

**Kirsten** Actually Rosa *is* cooking tonight. She told me all about it and I reckon you'd be mad to miss her roast.

**Jan** *(Exiting UR to kitchen)* Well you lot please yourself. Hope to see you soon, Brad.

**Brad** Yeah, sure thing, Jan. Bye.

**Amanda** *(Teasing)* Ooooh. Jan and now Tim. Right little charmer aren't we?  
*(They embrace and kiss lightly)*

**Kirsten** Yes, well, three being a crowd and all that. *(To BRAD)* Let's know if you need a hand cleaning your clothes again. *(AMANDA goes to whack her sister as KIRSTEN exits DR)* And remember, I love to handwash smalls.  
*(Exits)*

**Amanda** Get outa here.

**Brad** Listen, Babe, I'm sorry about that business with my jeans.

**Amanda** *(Puts her arms around him)* I bet you say that to all the girls. *(They kiss)*

**Brad** You know I'd really like to take them off for you.

**Amanda** *(She slaps his arm playfully)* Behave.

**Brad** Spoilsport.

**Amanda** *(Leading him to settee)* Come over here and tell me all about your little chat with Dad. *(They sit and embrace)*

**Brad** I'd rather talk about us.

**Amanda** Yes all right, all in good time. But what did Dad say? You obviously made a big impression.

**Brad** There are so many things I'd like to say to you. I'm crazy about every little bit of your gorgeous body. Let me tell you everything.

**Amanda** Hmm. Talk's cheap. Let's forget the talk. *(They kiss but are interrupted)*

**Kirsten** *(Enters)* Anyone seen my ... oops, sorry. *(About turns and exits)*

**Brad** *(Coughs a little. Rises)* C'mon babe, let's get outa here.

**Amanda** *(Pulls him back, strokes his arms)* Back here, you. You give up too easily.

**Brad** *(Their foreheads touch)* I'll never give up with you. You are the sexiest woman alive. *(They kiss but again are interrupted)*

**Jan** *(Enters from UL)* Rosa is staying in and has promised a ... *(Spots the couple)* Oh. I'll just tell Rosa you're here and that ...

**Amanda** I thought you were going out.

**Jan** I am. *(Exits DR)* I'm not here. Bye!

**Tim** *(Enters from DR)* The sooner we leave the .... Hey!  
*(JAN takes TIM in hand and leads/pushes him out DR)*

**Jan** We're going this way.

**Tim** *(Being hustled)* All right, all right. No need to push.  
*(Pause. BRAD and AMANDA look at one another. Both see the funny side)*

**Brad** How about we try the middle of town? *(Slight cough)*

**Amanda** No, it's a test.

**Brad** A test?

**Amanda** Yes. Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder.

**Brad** You are definitely the sexiest woman in the world.

**Amanda** You said that before.

**Brad** And I'll go on saying it. You wait. When we're alone tonight, I'll tell you things that'll blow your mind.

**Amanda** Oh so I do have a mind. For a while there I thought you were only interested in my body.

**Brad** Whatever gave you that idea?

**Amanda** Hmm. Who cares? *(They kiss but are interrupted again)*

**Rosa** Oh I am very sorry.

**Amanda** Rosa!

**Brad** *(Frustrated)* Come in, Rosa. We've been waiting for you.

**Rosa** For me? I do not understand.

**Amanda** It's not your fault, Rosa. Brad and I have been ... having a chat, but everyone keeps dropping in.

**Rosa** Well I am dropping in to see how many are staying for tea.

**Brad** Count me in, Rosa. I've had no luck in the romance department, I might as well sample your fabulous grub.

**Rosa** *(Distressed)* Grub? I have no grub in my food.

**Amanda** *(Rising and leading BRAD LC)* Come on you. Let's have a look at the garden.

**Rosa** Have I said something wrong?

**Amanda** *(Calls back)* No Rosa. Everything's fine. It's just that Don Juan here needs a bit of room to strut his stuff.

**Brad** See you at tea. *(They exit giggling with BRAD coughing)*

**Rosa** Okay. *(Plumps cushions and is about to leave)*

**Kirsten** *(Pokes head past door DR. Whispers)* Have they gone?

**Rosa** Who?

**Kirsten** Everyone.

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**Rosa** Your father and step-mother have gone to next door and your sister and Brad are outside in the garden.

**Kirsten** (*Enters, approaches ROSA*) Good. Let's get cracking.

**Rosa** (*Departing for kitchen*) Well come quickly if you want to finish.

**Kirsten** Not in there. We have to do it here.

**Rosa** (*Stops*) Here? How can we do it here?

**Kirsten** If we go in the kitchen, someone might drop in and discover us. This has to be a secret, remember? (*Removes small notepad and pen/cil*) Now I've got a few questions. When do I add the garlic?

**Rosa** I am worried, Kirsten. This is not an easy dish. You will need to watch it very carefully.

**Kirsten** And it has to be extra virgin olive oil, yes?

**Rosa** And do not cook the onions and carrots for too long. Just enough to prepare them for the main sauce later.

**Kirsten** I'm excited, Rosa. Can you imagine what they're going to say when they discover who the chef really is?

**Rosa** I can imagine what they will say if you make a terrible disaster.

**Kirsten** Disaster? I have the world's greatest chef to teach me, to show me exactly how to prepare the cuisine fantastique. It will be a triumph.

**Rosa** God willing.

**Kirsten** Now how do I know when to paste?

**Rosa** Paste? What is this paste? (*Looks at notepad*) That is baste.

**Kirsten** Paste, baste. Who cares? I need to know when to do it. I think you said every twenty minutes.

**Rosa** That is for the main course and there is no timetable, Kirsten. Cooking is like the art. You either know or don't know when it is time.

**Kirsten** So teach me.

**Rosa** In five minutes? Here, in the sitting-room without utensils and food. How can I do these things?

**Kirsten** Sit down, come on, sit. (*ROSA sits on settee*) Rosa, this is important. Please try and understand. To my family, I am seen as scatter-brained.

**Rosa** Scatter-brained?

**Kirsten** Ah, dumb, useless, good for nothing. Stupida!

**Rosa** No, you are not good for nothing. At some things you are okay and at other things you are very good.

**Kirsten** At shopping yes, at removing the clothes of my sister's boyfriend, yes. But when it comes to practical things – cooking, sewing, repairing anything - I'm useless. I didn't fix Brad's jeans. *You* did.

**Rosa** You managed to help him take them off.

**Kirsten** Rosa! A back-handed compliment.

**Rosa** And you are a businesswoman. You are working in the stock market. And you are very successful.

**Kirsten** Not the same thing. This is different. My father and sister, even my mother when she was here, all used to laugh at me when I tried to do anything around the house. They still do. Even my charming stepmother has joined the chorus. Well, now's the time to show those smirking wiseguys I'm not so dumb after all. I'm going to cook a meal that'll take their breath away.

**Rosa** Not the curry. You must not use the curry.

**Kirsten** No, 'take their breath away' means to *not* burn their throats. I mean, to impress them, to make them sit up and take notice, to make them stop stirring me. Do you understand?

**Rosa** I think maybe you are stirring me.

**Kirsten** So tonight, when they sit down to what they think is a fabulous feast prepared by wonder cook Rosa, it will in fact have been created by little old me. Yours truly.

**Rosa** Tonight?

**Kirsten** Tonight.

**Rosa** You are a very brave woman.

**Kirsten** Not brave, Rosa, determined. Now come on, tell me about oven settings. And do I put the dish in the middle of the oven, the bottom, or the top? Where?

**Rosa** I could show you if we went into the kitchen.

**Kirsten** No! Dad and that woman could turn up at any minute and Brad and Mandy are just out in the garden.

**Rosa** I wish you would not refer to Jan as that woman. It is very disrespectful.

**Kirsten** You're right, I apologise. And for Amanda as well.

**Rosa** I think I have offended her and Brad. They were trying to kiss and I stopped them.

**Kirsten** Me too.

**Rosa** (*Shocked*) You were trying to kiss Brad? This is definitely not correct.

**Kirsten** No, no. Well, not recently. No, I also interrupted them. They were snogging right where you're sitting, and Muggins here sort of cramped their style.

**Rosa** Snogging?

**Kirsten** Yes. Smooching, canoodling, hug and kiss time.

**Rosa** That is called snogging?

**Kirsten** Amongst other things. Now they're probably up to round three outside by the pool. Hey! (*Heads LC*) Let's try and catch 'em at it.

**Rosa** No, you must not. That is spying and it is not correct.

**Kirsten** Rosa, where's your sense of adventure? Come on. (*Reluctantly ROSA heads LC and KIRSTEN peers into garden*) There they are. Keep back, they might see us. Ohhhh, isn't that romantic?

**Rosa** I have to say, Kirsten, there are things which I do not like so much.

**Kirsten** I think any woman would like a handsome young hunk like Brad doing that to them. Come on Rosa, you were young once. Don't tell me you didn't enjoy a quick cuddle.

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**Rosa** My parents were very strict. In my family, it was a big disgrace to behave like that before you were married.

**Kirsten** Rosa, they're kissing. They're fully dressed – well, just about – and they're simply doing what is natural and normal. I can't believe you're such a prude.

**Rosa** There are some things you should keep in private. (*KIRSTEN exasperated*) And while I am on this subject, there is another matter I would like to talk about.

**Kirsten** Rosa, you don't have to play Mother now that my real mother has flown the coop.

**Rosa** I do not understand this flying coop.

**Kirsten** (*Taking ROSA back to settee*) I mean that because my mother is no longer living here, please don't feel you have to look after Mandy and me. We're big girls now. We're fine.

**Rosa** I am not trying to be your mother. I just want you to know that I do not like you or Amanda talking about the new Mrs. Grey like she is some terrible person.

**Kirsten** But she is. Rosa, I didn't choose her, she's not my mother and as this is my house, I'll talk about her the way I want. (*Pause. ROSA shocked not so much by the answer but by the way it was spoken. KIRSTEN realises this and backs down*) I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. You're right. I am being bitchy. I'll try and be civil. Polite. (*ROSA smiles*)

**Rosa** Thank you. I am telling you this because I think it is right and because I have been working for your family since you were a small baby. You know I feel very close to you all.  
(*Pause. The women embrace in a sincere feeling of warmth and affection*)

**Kirsten** And we love you very much. But now, let's get back to this cooking. What about the vegetables? When do I add them to the oven?

**Rosa** Oh, I am not sure this is such a good idea.

**Kirsten** Rosa, you promised. You promised to help me make this terrific meal and there's no backing out. Tonight's the night.

**Rosa** And I am forgetting something else.

**Kirsten** I'm sorry, I won't accept any excuses.

**Rosa** The oven has been breaking down.

**Kirsten** What!?! Now you tell me. I've spent all this time preparing to silence my smarmy family once and forever and now you say the stove is stuffed.

**Rosa** It is working but there has been a funny noise.

**Kirsten** Noise? What sort of noise?

**Rosa** It is maybe something loose. I have telephoned the man to look but he cannot come until tomorrow.

**FX** *Telephone rings. It is situated DL*

**Rosa** I will answer it. (*She moves to phone*)

**Kirsten** If that's for Dad, take a message. He should be back soon.

**Rosa** (*Into phone*) Hello. ... Yes but Mr. Grey is not at home. Can I take a message? ... I'm sorry, can you say that again. ... Please, you are shouting. I cannot understand.

**Kirsten** Rosa?

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**Rosa** (*Waves KIRSTEN away*) Now if you are going to speak like that, I will not be able to give your message to Mr. Grey. ... Then you are a very stupid man and you should mind your language. ... And the same to you, you ... Bastardo! (*Crescendo begins*) Desgenerado! Desgraciado! Bestia!!!  
(*ROSA slams down phone and is obviously upset. KIRSTEN is stunned not only by the conversation but also by ROSA'S out of character turn of phrase*)

**Kirsten** Rosa. What happened? Who was that?

**Rosa** I do not know and I do not care. Some man was swearing and saying ridiculous things.

**Kirsten** Rosa, you're shaking. Was it that man who rang Dad before?

**Rosa** He was drunk. He was saying terrible things about me and my family.

**Kirsten** *Your* family!? But how does he know about your family? How does he even know about *you*?

**Rosa** I do not know and I do not want to know.

**Kirsten** Come and sit down.

**Rosa** No, I have things to do in the kitchen. (*She exits*)

**Kirsten** Rosa! (*Goes after her*) Rosa wait. We have to talk. (*ROSA ignores this and exits. KIRSTEN calls*) Well please don't forget tonight. I have to do this tonight.

**Jan** (*Entering LC*) What do you have to do tonight?  
(*JAN followed by TIM enter and come down. KIRSTEN covers her tracks*)

**Kirsten** Dad, we've just had another phone call.

**Tim** What! (*JAN and TIM worried*)

**Kirsten** Rosa took it.

**Jan** Not that idiot who rang before?

**Kirsten** I think so. Rosa's pretty upset. She said the guy threatened her family.

**Tim** Rosa's family!?

**Kirsten** Rosa swore at him and hung up.

**Jan** Rosa swore?

**Kirsten** She gave him heaps. You wouldn't need to speak Spanish to work out she was really slagging him off.

**Tim** I'd better talk to her. (*Exits to kitchen*)

**Jan** This is getting out of hand.

**Kirsten** You've gotta get the police involved. We can't let this go on.

**Jan** Your father says no, says he can handle it.

**Kirsten** Well if he won't, I will.

**Jan** Kirsten, don't! (*KIRSTEN stops and looks at her step-mother*) Please. (*Pause. JAN has asked politely and KIRSTEN acquiesces*) Look, can we talk? (*Another pause. KIRSTEN moves back to JAN. They sit*) This is hardly the best time but I just don't want to go on like we are at present.

**Kirsten** (*Cool*) I don't know what you're talking about.

**Jan** Yes you do. (*Pause*) Look, it's not easy for me. I know you and Amanda hate me.

**Kirsten** We don't hate you.

**Jan** I'll re-phrase that. Since I married your father, you and Amanda have not exactly hit it off with your new step-mother. Is that fair?

**Kirsten** More or less.

**Jan** All I'm asking is that you hear my side of the story.

**Kirsten** We're not interested in your story. My father's an adult, although right now he's acting like a prat, but he makes his own decisions. He chose to divorce my mother and marry you. End of story.

**Jan** Yes but if we're going to live together, maybe it's best that we ... thrash this out.

**Kirsten** Thrash what out?

**Jan** Let me try again. I think there's a possibility that you and Amanda believe I broke up your parents' happy marriage. I think maybe you see me as the bimbo who went after your father for his money. How am I doing so far?

**Kirsten** I'm just giving you the rope.

**Jan** Well here's my side of the story. I met your father more than three years ago. He approached me at a conference I was running. At the time he and your mother were supposedly happily married.

**Kirsten** They *were* happily married.

**Jan** If you say so.

**Kirsten** I *know* so.

**Jan** Your father asked for my business card and then rang me a week later and asked for a date. I said no. Then he sent me flowers and again asked me out. I'd checked his background and heard he was married. When he rang me the next time, I told him I knew he was married and he said his marriage was a sham and he was getting divorced.

**Kirsten** You expect me to believe some or all of this?

**Jan** I'm not expecting anything. What you believe is your business. You could ask your father of course but maybe that'd cause more trouble than its worth.

**Kirsten** I've already told you. My father's an adult. He makes his own decisions.

**Jan** I don't deserve the gold digger tag, and in case your father hasn't told you, I've actually got more money than he has. Much more. And if anyone was out to marry for money, there's a pretty strong case against your dear old pa.

**Kirsten** Have you finished?

**Jan** I think so. Any questions?

**Kirsten** Not now and not likely to be. As they say, we'll agree to disagree.

**Jan** About what?

**Kirsten** (*Shrugs shoulders*) Who knows? Life in general.

**Jan** Fair enough. I've said my piece. But can we agree on one thing?

**Kirsten** What thing?

**Jan** That this business with the crank calls has to be handled by someone other than your father.

**Kirsten** Agreed. But he won't listen.

**Jan** Let's try weight of numbers. We gang up and force him to let the police know what's going on. And the sooner the better.

**Kirsten** Okay. Who's first?  
**Jan** I'll go. You follow in a couple of minutes.  
*(JAN exits. KIRSTEN ponders latest news about her father's behaviour. BRAD and AMANDA enter through conservatory. They are tingling from their touching)*

**Brad** Hey, why aren't you washing some poor guy's jeans?  
**Amanda** *(Knows her sister is upset)* Kirst? What's happened?  
**Kirsten** There's been another phone call. From that weirdo.  
**Amanda** But we weren't supposed to answer. Why did you?  
**Kirsten** I didn't. It was Rosa. She answered and he got her really upset. He almost had her in tears.

**Brad** It's gone too far. We've got to call the cops.  
**Kirsten** He even made Rosa swear.  
**Amanda** Rosa swore? I don't believe it.  
**Brad** Does Tim know?  
**Kirsten** He and Jan are in with Rosa now. Look, Dad needs to be told. He can't handle this on his own.

**Brad** *(Coughs)* I'll tell him *(Exits to kitchen, coughing)* Leave it to me.  
**Amanda** *(Calling)* Don't push him, Brad. Let him feel he's still in control.  
**Kirsten** Sit, sit, sit.  
**Amanda** *(Sits)* Oh, I'm all ....  
**Kirsten** A-quiver.  
**Amanda** Something. I've just had a close encounter with my gorgeous guy and now I'm worried sick about these lunatic phone calls.

**Kirsten** Well add another dimension because it gets worse. You know those opinions we expressed about the evil bimbo Jan.  
**Amanda** What's happened?  
**Kirsten** I've just had a most interesting conversation with our stepmother.  
**Amanda** And? *(Suddenly disgusted)* She's not pregnant?  
**Kirsten** *(Suddenly thrown)* My God! Of course, that's it! She couldn't come straight out with it so she started on some new tack.  
**Amanda** What new tack?  
**Kirsten** She tried the "I wanna be your friend" routine so as to prepare me for the news about the baby.

**Amanda** Oh brilliant. That's fantastic. That's all I need? Give us a kiss, Brad. Just mind the zoo mobile and the crappy nappy.  
**Kirsten** No, hang on. She didn't say that. We're jumping to conclusions – again.  
**Amanda** Again? What'd she say?  
**Kirsten** Heaps. Scary, scary stuff.  
**Amanda** Tell me.  
**Kirsten** What would you say if I told you Dad was a bit of a playboy?  
**Amanda** She told you that?  
**Kirsten** She reckons he made all the running with Jan, that he chased her even when he was still married to Mum.  
**Amanda** She's lying.

- Kirsten** Jan said she kept refusing Dad's invitations and even confronted him about his marriage and that Dad said his marriage was over and he was getting a divorce.
- Amanda** But Dad said he didn't even meet Jan until after he and Mum split.
- Kirsten** Someone's lying. And it gets worse.
- Amanda** Hang on, hang on. Do you actually believe her? I mean Jan's obviously come up with this spiel to hide the fact she's after Dad's money.
- Kirsten** *Our* money. But no, that's the point. Jan has her own money.
- Amanda** *(Shocked)* What?
- Kirsten** Big bucks. Apparently she's a wealthy woman, *very* wealthy and if anyone married for money, it was Dad.
- Amanda** Bloody hell!
- Kirsten** Now why would she make this up? She knows we could check most if not all her story. If she's lying, we could expose her once and for all. I hate to say this but I think she's telling the truth.
- Amanda** I dunno which is worse. Jan being a rich bitch or Dad being a liar.  
*(Pause. At times now the women chat less to one another and more to themselves. They are thinking aloud)*
- Kirsten** It really shocked me. I just didn't know what to say.
- Amanda** What did you say?
- Kirsten** Can't remember. Oh we got onto the crank calls and agreed to pressure Dad to get the cops involved.
- Amanda** *(Thinking aloud)* You know, when you're a kid, your parents are sort of God like. Then as you get older you start to see them for what they are. Human. Parents have got faults just like anyone.
- Kirsten** Maybe Dad told us what he did to protect us.
- Amanda** Protect us?
- Kirsten** Well he could hardly say, "Look girls, me and your mother hate each other's guts and I'm currently on the prowl for a bit on the side".
- Amanda** Is that what you believe? Is that what you think he was doing?
- Kirsten** According to Jan he was. She reckons he was a randy womaniser.
- Amanda** Our father?
- Kirsten** *(Shrugs)* He wouldn't be the first.
- Amanda** Maybe it was just with Jan and maybe he loved her.
- Kirsten** And maybe pigs can fly and maybe we misjudged Jan.
- Amanda** You say she's wealthy? How wealthy? Is it cash, real estate, shares, what?
- Kirsten** She didn't say. But Dad's not exactly broke and from what she said, I'd say she could buy and sell him several times over.
- Amanda** *(Shaking her head)* Wow! What are we gunna do?
- Kirsten** I don't think confronting Dad is ever a good move and besides ...
- Amanda** Not Dad, Jan. How are we going to get into her good books without having to grovel. I hate grovelling. It's against my religion. But if she's loaded, stuff the principles.
- Kirsten** Do nothing for now. If we react immediately, Jan'll think we're weak and only interested in her money.
- Amanda** But we *are* weak and only interested in her money. *I* am.

**Kirsten** Let's try the sisterhood routine. You know, us women have got to stick together. We're sorry we misjudged you and whilst we can never be your daughters, we'd like to be your friend.

**Amanda** Oh chuck! (*Sudden change of attitude*) Do you think she'll go for it?

**Kirsten** Dunno. (*Noise from UL*)

**Tim** (*Offstage*) All right, all right. I'll call the cops.

**Kirsten** But say nothing for now.  
(*TIM enters followed by JAN and BRAD*)

**Tim** (*To his daughters*) I suppose you heard. We've had another call.

**Kirsten** I was here, Dad, when Rosa took the call.

**Jan** Your father's agreed to call the police.

**Tim** Contact. It's better if I go in person. Over the phone they'll think I'm some crank.

**Brad** I'll go with you, Tim.

**Jan** It'd be quicker to just pick up the phone and ...

**Tim** I said I'll go in person.

**Jan** All right, keep your shirt on. I'm only trying to help.

**Amanda** Go easy, Dad. Jan's only trying to help.

**Kirsten** Yes, Dad. Jan obviously cares about you and only wants the best for you.  
(*Pause. What are these two step-daughters saying? They seem sincere. JAN and TIM look at the sisters*)

**Brad** (*Breaks the silence*) We can take my car.

**Tim** Yeah, okay, don't rush me. (*Wanders LC*) Brad and I'll go to the police. Jan, you pop next door and warn Googie.

**Jan** Googie? Why do we want to involve her?

**Amanda** Yes Dad. Jan's right. The fewer people who know about this the better.

**Tim** Because if that creep drops in, his best approach is through Googie's enormous garden and if Googie has her whizz-bang alarm system switched on, we'll get plenty of notice.

**Brad** Good thinking. (*He coughs*)

**Jan** So you want me to tell Googie to make sure her perimeter alarms are switched on because we're expecting a homicidal maniac? Googie'll have a fit.

**Kirsten** C'mon Dad, be fair. Listen to Jan. Her idea is much better.

**Tim** What idea? And what's going on here?

**Kirsten** (*Making it up as she speaks*) Ah, telling Googie that we're thinking about investing in the same alarm system and could she make sure it's on so we can hear it if it ever goes off.

**Tim** That's even more ridiculous than telling the truth.

**Jan** Actually it's not a bad idea.

**Amanda** It's a great idea. Trust the women to come up with a sensible solution.

**Tim** There's something funny here - some sort of female conspiracy.

**Kirsten** You're paranoid, Dad. Just relax. As your old mate, Stan would say, "You look after the boat rentals and we'll run the army".

**Brad** Oh (*Coughs*) I like that. (*Coughs*)

**Amanda** Well come on you two. Enough of the chat.

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**Tim** Okay, Brad and I call on the gendarmes, Jan, you make sure Googie's got her alarms on in the garden and ...

**Kirsten** We'll stay here and hold the fort.

**Tim** Don't open the door and no matter what happens, don't answer the phone.

**Kirsten** *(Don't fuss)* Dad! Don't fuss.

**Tim** I'm serious.

**Amanda** Father knows best.

**Kirsten** Oh and Dad. *(Gives him slip of paper)* Can you grab these things for me while you're out?

**Tim** What!?! Shopping!

**Kirsten** It's for tea tonight.

**Tim** No, it's Sunday. I'm cooking a barbecue.

**Kirsten** There's been a change. Rosa's staying in. She asked me to ask you to get these things.

**Tim** But I always cook on a Sunday night.

**Amanda** *(Buttering up her father)* Dad, Brad's staying for tea. It'll be his first meal here and you'd like him to taste the wonderful Rosa's cooking, now wouldn't you?

**Tim** Brad's a bloke. He'd love a barbie and a beer, wouldn't you Brad?

**Brad** Ah, whatever.

**Tim** *(Suspicious)* Why do I get the feeling something's going on here?

**Jan** Darling, why don't you have a night off? Rosa will produce something special. Besides, it's going to rain.

**Kirsten** Yes big storm tonight, father. We can't have soggy snags.

**Tim** Oh well that settles it. We can't have poor old Timmy getting wet can we? Just do as you're told, Timmy. *(Exiting UC)* Come on, Brad. We'll take my car. Won't be long.

**Brad** Sure. *(To WOMEN)* Bye. *(Waves to women, exits after TIM, slight cough)*

**Jan** Okay, I'll pop next door and see Googie. Nice idea of yours, Kirsten.

**Amanda** Kirsten? I thought it was your idea ... Jan.

**Jan** Well it doesn't matter. If it keeps your father happy, we'll give it a go. *(JAN starts to exit via conservatory but stops when AMANDA calls)*

**Amanda** Jan. I was wondering if I could ask you something?

**Jan** Sure. About Googie?

**Amanda** No. It's ah, something personal. *(JAN returns but KIRSTEN makes signals behind JAN'S back trying to tell AMANDA not to push things)*

**Jan** Fire away.

**Amanda** I'm thinking of leaving home. *(Pause. No response from JAN)* And I am thinking of starting up a business.

**Jan** Great. Good for you. *(KIRSTEN horrified)* Is it something involving Brad?

**Amanda** Ah yes, but he doesn't know about it yet. *(Pause. This sounds weird)* I mean we've discussed it – obviously – but I haven't told him my decision so please don't let on, if you get my meaning.

**Jan** Of course. Mum's the word.

**Kirsten** Mandy, I don't think Jan wants to hear about your personal business ventures.

**Jan** No, I do, I'm interested. And I'd love to help if I can.

**Amanda** Thanks. I appreciate it. But I have a problem. I need some start-up capital and I was going to ask Dad.

**Jan** Go for it. I can't speak for your father but I'm sure he'd help if he can.

**Amanda** It's just a little bit delicate. You see I don't want to ask him and somehow, embarrass him.

**Jan** You won't embarrass him, he's your father.

**Amanda** Yes but I'm not sure if he's got the cash to spare right now and I'd hate to put him on the spot. You see what I mean?

**Jan** I think so.

**Amanda** I mean if I were sure he had the money or could get it easily from somewhere, I'd feel much happier about asking him. I don't want him to use some phony excuse rather than admit he hasn't got the cash.

**Jan** I don't think you've got a problem, Mandy. In fact I *know* you haven't. Put your proposal to Tim and I'm sure he'll be thrilled to help you. He obviously likes Brad and I'm sure you'll make it work.  
*(Starts to exit LC)*

**Amanda** *(Brighter)* Thanks Jan, thanks a lot.

**Jan** *(Turns back)* You go ahead and ask. Us girls have got to stick together.  
*(Smiles, winks. Exits)*

**Kirsten** *(Calls)* Yes, thanks Jan. We appreciate it.

**Amanda** *(Pleased)* You're right. She is loaded.

**Kirsten** You idiot. What are you trying to do?

**Amanda** Not too bad, if I say so myself.

**Kirsten** She's not stupid, Mandy. It's pretty easy to see you're poking your nose into her finances.

**Amanda** So? She's family. And I reckon our stepmother is a bit of all right. What do ya' reckon?

**FX** *Phone rings. WOMEN alarmed. ROSA enters looking distressed*

**Rosa** That is the telephone. I want to answer it.

**Kirsten** No, Rosa. Dad said we weren't to answer the phone.

**Rosa** But I have to speak to that horrible person.

**Amanda** You can't Rosa. Dad's gone to the police. He told us not to answer the phone.

**Rosa** I don't care. I am going to speak. *(She goes to phone)*

**Kirsten** Rosa! *(Too late, ROSA has picked up phone)*

**Rosa** Now listen to me and you listen good you miserable scumbag person. You are a criminal. Do you hear me? A criminal! A gilipollas cojudo! And you are a coward! If I meet you I will spit on your filthy face. You are a criminal!

**Kirsten** Rosa, hang up. *(Pause. ROSA looks mystified)*

**Amanda** Rosa?  
*(ROSA hands phone to KIRSTEN who steps forward and takes it. Pause)*

**Kirsten** *(Covers mouthpiece)* What'll I do?

**Amanda** Just hang up.

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**Rosa** No. You must answer.  
*(KIRSTEN uncertain then slowly raises phone and hesitatingly answers it)*

**Kirsten** Hello. *(Pause. Huge change)* Dad?

**Amanda** Dad!?

**Rosa** *(Distressed)* What have I said? *(The sisters are very amused)*

**Kirsten** It's okay. Rosa thought you were that idiot. .... No, we're fine. ... What? ... Ah that's Chardonnay. Can't you read my writing? ... No, we haven't got any and we need it for the meal tonight. I mean, Rosa needs it. ... Because Rosa's cooking a special dish. ... Look, just get the things on the list. And hurry up. ... No, that's okay. We'll fix Rosa. ... Okay. See ya.  
*(Hangs up)*

**Amanda** *(Amused)* That was the funniest thing I've seen in years. You should have seen your face, Rosa.

**Rosa** I am so ashamed. Your father will be very angry.

**Kirsten** No he won't. In fact he was laughing so much I couldn't get him to understand how we need those things for tonight.

**Amanda** If only we'd recorded it.

**Kirsten** I told him about the wine and he's got the other stuff already.

**Amanda** Hey, what's going on here? How come you're suddenly so interested in Rosa's cooking?

**Jan** *(Enters through conservatory)* Googie's fine. She said she always puts on the security including the alarms in the garden. They're on now. *(Sees others)* What's happened?

**Kirsten** You'll never guess.

**Amanda** Rosa's just called Dad a scumbag, a coward and a filthy criminal.

**Kirsten** And a cojudo.

**Amanda** A gilipollas cojudo!

**Rosa** Oh, please. *(She exits to kitchen in distress)*

**Kirsten** Rosa! *(Goes after her but puts up hand to stop others)*

**Amanda** The phone rang and Kirst and I refused to answer it like Dad said. Then Rosa bursts in, grabs the phone and gives the caller this almighty blast about being a creep and everything.

**Jan** And it was your father?

**Amanda** Poor old Dad didn't get a word in.

**Jan** What did he say?

**Amanda** What could he say? Rosa didn't stop for breath. Now, of course, she's all upset and probably crying in the kitchen.

**Jan** That bloody phone call. And all because your father tooted his horn.

**Amanda** Yes but at least now the police have been told and if he tries anything again, we'll be okay.

**Jan** Let's hope so.

**Kirsten** *(Pokes head round door)* Everything's fine with Rosa. I'm going to stay with her for a while but I think it'd be best if no-one else comes in.

**Amanda** Is she okay?

**Kirsten** She's fine, just highly embarrassed. And I think any do-gooders would not exactly be welcome.

**Jan** Understood. We'll stay clear.

## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 29

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**Kirsten** Oh and could you do the same with Dad and Brad. No trespassers in the kitchen. *(Gets her own unintentional joke)* Dad and Brad. *(Deeper voice)* Dad and Brad. *(Pleased with herself)* I like it. Bye. *(Exits)*

**Amanda** Dad and Brad. Hadn't heard that before.

**Jan** Well from the way you two were looking at one another, and I gather doing a bit more than looking, it might be heard a lot more round here.

**Amanda** Yeah, he is nice.

**Jan** He's lovely. You deserve each other. *(Pause. Nice conversation between these two is rare)* And your father obviously likes him. Even if he did think Brad was the local playboy.

**Amanda** *(Weak laugh)* Takes one to know one.  
*(Pause. Oops. Not a safe topic at present if at all)*

**Jan** Yes. I wonder what gave him that idea?  
*(TIM and BRAD appear UC. They have been caught in a sudden shower and are wettish. We can see them through the french windows. They go to open the doors which are stuck. They try to open them without making a fuss. Pause because TIM and BRAD have missed their entrance)*

**Jan** *(Invents a line)* Oh, ... I think the boys should be back soon.

**Amanda** *(Looks upstage and invents a line)* Yes, they're here. *(WOMEN look upstage as MEN finally get door open and enter. TIM carries bag of groceries. Both brush rain from their clothes/hair)*

**Tim** *(Inventing a line)* Damn door. Must get that fixed.

**Jan** That was quick. How did you get on?

**Tim** Fine. The cops told us to call them as soon as we get another call.

**Brad** *(Croaky voice)* If we get another call.

**Amanda** It's a good job the police didn't hear Rosa on the phone. They arrest criminals, Dad. You'd be in the slammer, pronto.

**Tim** My God. I thought the woman was mad. *(Looks around)* Where is she?

**Jan** In the kitchen with Kirsten. But don't go in there. Rosa's pretty upset and Kirsten wants to be alone with her for a while.

**Tim** Well Rosa needs this stuff. Kirsten was very insistent.

**Amanda** Yeah there's something funny going on with that. Why is Kirsten interested in the food?

**Tim** Only one way to find out. *(Heads towards kitchen)*

**Jan** Tim! Go easy.  
*(He enters kitchen. Moments later there is a scream and TIM comes flying out sans parcel. He's been pushed. KIRSTEN follows and yells from door)*

**Kirsten** I told you not to come in here. All of you. Rosa wants to be alone.  
*(OTHERS stunned)*

**Tim** Bloody hell, Kirsten. What do you think you're doing?

**Rosa** *(Appears)* I am terribly sorry, Mister Grey. I did not know it was you on the telephone.

**Tim** You and Kirsten make a good team. One insults me, the other assaults me.

**Jan** It's okay, Rosa. We've contacted the police and it looks like we've got nothing more to worry about.

**Rosa** Oh I hope that is so.

**Jan** Forget it, Rosa. This horrible business is over. Terminado.

## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 30

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**FX**            *Siren from alarm next door is heard. EVERYONE freezes, looks worried.  
BRAD scampers LC, looks offstage*

**Tim**            What the hell is that?  
*(BRAD then comes back a little and calls to the company)*

**Brad**            *(Very husky voice)* There's someone in the *(Coughs)* garden.  
*(General fear)*

**Jan**            Oh my God! It's him!  
*(OTHERS look stunned, afraid as curtain falls quickly)*

**End of Act One**

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*(Just before the second act begins, an announcement is made. Wait until the audience is seated and the house lights have dimmed. The announcement could be pre-recorded or delivered live)*

### Act Two

**Announcer** Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention. You may have noticed that one of our actors has been having some problems with his voice. Well I regret to announce that ..... *(Insert name of actor playing Brad)* has lost his voice completely and cannot continue. Now rather than cancel the play, one of our wonderful stage hands has agreed to step in and play the part of Brad for the second act. It means he will have to use a script for some of the time but we're sure you'll understand. And Brian, the boyfriend of one of our cast, who was watching the show tonight, has come backstage and agreed to look after the lighting and sound cues. So, we're all fixed and ready to roll. After all, the show must go on. So please enjoy the remainder of our play.

*(Pause. Curtain rises. Alarm is sounding. It's the same scene as at the end of the first act. Actors all in their same positions. BRAD – now played by the stage manager and holding a script – moves back from investigating the alarm. The actor playing BRAD is far less confident than the previous actor, has trouble getting out the right words on cue. He almost reads each word at a time. Forget interpretation. It might help if he's nothing like the actor previously playing BRAD. The new actor could be the antithesis of a leading man - he's now short, fat and ugly, with apologies to the actor now cast as BRAD. Perhaps milk bottle glasses which keep slipping and being pushed up would be the icing on the fake)*

**Brad** There's someone in the garden. *(General fear)*

**Jan** Oh my God! It's him!

**Tim** Who? Is it that moron?

**Jan** Tim, call the police.

**Brad** *(Checking script, he's lost already)* There's someone in the garden. *(OTHERS grimace. "We should have closed the show". BRAD turns page searching for rightplace)*

**Rosa** This crazy man will kill us. We will all be going to die!  
*(Much distress)*

**Tim** Don't panic. Stay calm. It could be a false alarm.

**Brad** I think there were at least two of them. *(More distress)*  
*(Pause as we await the sound effects)*

**Tim** *(ad lib)* I said, "Don't panic"!

**Amanda** *(ad lib)* I thought I heard the phone ring.

**FX** Door bell chimes

**Tim** *(Ignores incorrect FX and goes to phone and answers it)* Yes? Who is it? .... Oh Google. *(General relief)* Yes we can hear the alarm. ... Yes, it is very loud. ... We've got some trespassers? .... What? Your nephews? .... Well thanks very much but could you please turn it off. .... I said 'Please turn it off' *(Alarm stops)*

## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 32

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**Tim** Thank you. (*Alarm starts again. TIM furious. Alarm stops again*) Yes, Googie, I appreciate you running an experiment to see if the alarm works. .... Yes, we'll definitely buy one. Tomorrow. .... What? Now? ... Oh all right. In five minutes. Yes, thanks, Googie. See you soon.  
(*He hangs up*)

**Jan** What's going on?

**Tim** Googie sent her two nephews out to trip the alarm. (*OTHERS react*)

**Amanda** She's mad. That woman is certifiable.

**Tim** Now she wants us to go over and see how to turn it off.

**Jan** But *she* can turn it off. It's her alarm.

**Brad** (*Slight pause with head in script*) I thought you said it was very expensive.

**Amanda** It is. It's the best you can get.

**Tim** Googie's going out and wants us to learn how to re-set the thing if it goes off again.

**Kirsten** So does that mean you won't be eating in tonight? Because if so I think it's damn rude to ask Rosa to cook something special and then just walk out.

**Brad** I'm staying.

**Jan** We're all staying, Kirsten.

**Tim** We'll be five minutes. The cops know what's going on, we've got Googie's alarms in the garden so let's forget about that road rage idiot and enjoy Rosa's cooking. (*Exiting through conservatory*) Come on, Jan.

**Jan** Five minutes, Rosa. I promise. (*Exits after TIM*)

**Kirsten** I'm starving. (*Ushers ROSA*) Come on, Rosa. I'll give you a hand to dish it up.

**Rosa** (*Being half-pushed into kitchen*) All right, I am going. Okay, okay.  
(*Pause. BRAD and AMANDA are alone. She moves to settee and beckons to him*)

**Amanda** Hey, handsome. Get y'buns over here.

**Brad** (*Sits on settee and holds script upstage*) Is your family always like this?

**Amanda** Forget about my family. You just concentrate on me.  
(*She moves to kiss him. Momentary pause as he checks script, realises they should kiss so they do. He breaks free and looks at script*)

**Brad** Hmm. You have a very kissable mouth.

**Amanda** Well my mouth'll do for starters. What else can you find?

**Brad** (*Navigating her caresses and the script*) Don't rush me. Half the fun is feeling your ... (*Turns page*) way around. But how can I get serious when you've got the clock running?

**Amanda** I thought you were a fast operator.

**Brad** (*Slowish*) Oh I am fast all right. I could have you ravished and wrapped up in two minutes.

**Amanda** Two minutes? You slow-coach. What happened to sprinting stud?

**Brad** Oh ha ha.

**Amanda** Well come on. Prove it. I reckon you're all talk.

**Brad** Amanda. Your father's next door and your sister's in the next room.

**Amanda** (*Moves to curtains upstage and closes them. Lights dim*) So? Time's running out, Big Boy.

**Brad** What are you doing?  
**Amanda** A bit of scene-setting. Now come on. You've got ninety-five seconds.  
*(Lights very dim except for light from conservatory)*  
**Brad** Hey! I was only kidding. Amanda. Stop mucking around.  
**Amanda** *(Back to BRAD. She removes her shirt and slacks)* Get your gear off, gorgeous. The clock's running.  
**Brad** Amanda! Oh God. Oh yes! Oh you're fantastic.  
**Amanda** Seventy seconds, sexy. You'd better keep the foreplay to a minimum.  
**Brad** These bloody jeans. My zipper's stuck.  
**Amanda** Ohhh, Brad. I'm all yours.  
**Brad** Give us a hand, babe.  
**Amanda** Adrenaline and hormones. I'm on a high.  
**Brad** Got it. Damn these shoes. *(Jeans removed)* They're off. Oh baby. Come here.  
**FX** *Front door chimes.*  
**Brad** Shit! There's someone at the door.  
**Amanda** F'get it. Rosa'll answer it. Kiss me.  
**Brad** Rosa! But ... oh f'get Rosa, you're beautiful.  
**Amanda** Not there.  
**Brad** Sorry. Not where?  
**Amanda** There. Yes. There. There! Ohhh!  
**Brad** Is it always like this for you, baby? I mean this is sensational for me. I think I'm ... *(turns page of his script)* falling in love.  
**FX** *Thunder clap followed by sound of rain which continues*  
**Brad** *(Frightened)* Bloody hell! What was that?  
**Amanda** That was the earth moving, darling. Is it moving for you?  
**Brad** Something's moving. Can you just shift your hand? *(Pause)* No, the other one. Oh yes, thanks. Oh that's fantastic.  
**Amanda** *(Giggles)* I hope you're not timing this.  
**Brad** *(Giggles)* I hope you're not miming this.  
**Amanda** *(Laughs)* I'm not. I'm not. *I'm not!*  
**Brad** *(Laughs)* Tell me, ma'am. Do you come here often?  
**Amanda** *(Giggles incorporated)* What? You mean here on the settee?  
**Brad** *(Laughter is infectious)* Now I bet you say that to all the boys.  
*(Shriek from AMANDA. The laughter has built in intensity. AMANDA is building to hysteria whilst BRAD is guffawing as well although in a stilted way of course as BRAD is being played by a nervous and unrehearsed actor)*  
**Amanda** Wait'll Kirsten hears about this.  
**FX** *Front door chimes.*  
**Brad** Oh no! There is someone at the door.  
**Jan** *(From conservatory. Calling into garden)* Hurry up, Tim. Just leave it.  
**Brad** Shiiiiit!

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*(Courting couple disengage. AMANDA grabs her clothes and BRAD'S jeans)*  
**Amanda** It's Jan and Dad. Let's get outa here!  
**Brad** I'm getting! I'm getting! Where's my ... ow!  
**Amanda** God! This is a turn-on!  
**Brad** *(Sarcastic)* Oh sure, wonderful. *(Panics)* Where are my jeans?  
**Amanda** Come on, lover. We can finish this upstairs. *(She exits DR)*  
**Brad** Sure but I can't find my jeans? *(Still searching for jeans, doesn't notice she's gone)* Amanda. *Amanda!*

**Jan** *(Enters wearing some moisture from the rain)* What's going on? Kirsten? Amanda?  
*(JAN goes to light switch. BRAD ducks behind settee. Lights come on)*  
**Brad** Oh no. Not again.

**Jan** Who's there? *(No response so heads towards kitchen)* Rosa. *(Suddenly gets fright seeing BRAD crouched low)* Brad!

**Brad** Oh. Hi, Jan. How are things?  
**Jan** I don't believe it. Don't tell me. You were fixing your car and got some grease on your jeans. Or have your keys gone walkabout again?  
**Brad** Look, you're not going to believe this.

**Jan** You're right, I'm not. So, should I slip into something more comfortable?  
**Brad** You're wet.  
**Jan** Yes it's called rain. You haven't got my towel down there I suppose?  
**Brad** I wish I had.

**Rosa** *(Enters)* Did somebody answer the door bell? *(Sees BRAD)* Brad!  
**Brad** Oh, hi, Rosa. Ah, Rosa, did you know it's raining? Outside I mean.  
**Jan** Brad, you wouldn't be missing a certain item of clothing by any chance?  
**Rosa** *(Shocked)* Brad! Where are your jeans?  
**Jan** You *are*. You've done it again.  
**Brad** Ah, you've heard of the "No smoking day" and the "No diets" day.  
**Rosa** Whoever was at the door will have gone away.  
**Brad** Well apparently today is "No jeans" day.

**Tim** *(Enters wetter than JAN and shakes water from clothes, hair)* Bloody hell, it's bucketing down out there.

**FX** *(Sound of rain suddenly becomes quite loud. OTHERS look a little embarrassed. Rain sound then softens but continues)*

**Jan** Not on the carpet, Tim.  
**Tim** *(Sees OTHERS)* What's happened?  
**Rosa** It's Brad. He's over here on the floor.  
**Tim** *(Suddenly panics)* Oh no! Not that moron. Did he break in? Brad, are you hurt?  
**Brad** No, Tim. I'm not hurt. Not yet anyway.  
**Tim** Well what are you doing down there? *(Twigs)* Oh no. I don't believe it. Not the grease on the trousers routine again!

**Kirsten** *(Enters at UR)* Rosa, can you come back .... Oh, family gathering. Dad, you're all wet and ... *(Sees BRAD crouching)* Brad's got grease on his jeans again.

**Tim** What is going on?

**Amanda** *(Enters holding BRAD'S jeans)* Oh, full house. *(To BRAD)* Here they are, Brad, all nice and dry. *(Shows jeans to OTHERS)*

**Jan** Nice and dry?

**Amanda** Yes, it's raining. Brad's jeans were wet. *(Pause. No-one believes any of it)*  
You do know it's raining?  
*(New audio engineer thinks another cue has been missed)*

**FX** *Sound of rain suddenly increases then decreases. Actors can only grimace and bear it.*

**Kirsten** Funny how the rain just happened to land on his jeans but missed the rest of him.

**Brad** Ah, yeah. I dodged the drops. The ones I could see.

**Amanda** Sorry to be so long, darling. Here you are.  
*(BRAD takes jeans and rises holding them in front of him. This is not easy as he's also holding his script. Finally he puts script on settee and puts his jeans back on again)*

**Kirsten** *(Naughty actor. Ad libs)* I think you've changed your shorts, Brad.

**Brad** *(Grabs script. Thrown completely)* What? Ah ... *(Hopping with one leg in jeans)*

**Kirsten** *(Continues ad lib. Very unprofessional)* When you undressed for me before, you had white shorts. Now they're blue.

**Jan** *(Decides to get script back onto rails. Ad lib)* That's enough, Kirsten. Leave the poor boy alone.  
*(TIM resumes what they have rehearsed)*

**Tim** *(Shaking head)* You've gotta be kidding, Brad. What is it with you?

**Jan** Tim, you're wet. You'll get a cold.

**FX** *Thunder clap.*

**Kirsten** Rosa, shouldn't you be back in the kitchen?

**Amanda** So how was Googie's alarm? Are you both now alarm-literate?

**Jan** Yes. Your father and I can now set and re-set the most expensive security system money can buy.

**Tim** If anyone creeps into our garden tonight, they'll set off Googie's alarm in stereo and the whole world'll know about it.

**Kirsten** Rosa. You've left that pot on the stove.

**Rosa** *(Worried exiting to kitchen)* Oh, my goodness!

**Kirsten** Well don't just stand there. Rosa's made a special effort to cook something special tonight. Go and get ready. Dad, you need a towel.

**Tim** *(Moving DR)* Yeah and Brad needs a cold shower.

**Kirsten** I'll just see if Rosa needs a hand. *(Exiting to kitchen)* You lot go and get ready.

**Amanda** That is amazing.

**Jan** What, Brad undressing for two different women in the one afternoon?

**Brad** Aw fair go. Look, I promise to keep my clothes on for the rest of the night.

**Amanda** *(Mock disappointment)* Ohhh, Brad. You spoilsport.

**Tim** Brad, if you can spare the time, later on I'll get you to give me some tips. *(Exits DR)*  
*(OTHERS laugh. Not BRAD)*

**Amanda** You know, Kirsten's amazing. She never helps Rosa.

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**Kirsten** (Re-enters) I heard that. Look, Rosa wants us to dine alfresco.  
**Jan** Outside? In this weather?  
**Kirsten** I mean casual, by the conservatory. Not in the dining-room. So get a move on.  
(Re-exits back to kitchen)  
**Jan** Well, I'll just go and freshen up. (Stops at door DR) Would you like me to knock before I come back?  
**Brad** No thanks, Jan. We'll be fine.  
**Jan** Brad, try and keep your pants on until *after* we finish eating.  
(JAN exits. BRAD winces)  
**Amanda** (All smiles and happiness, collapses on settee) Wow! That was unreal!  
**Brad** Unreal? More like *surreal*! Your whole family caught us in the middle of a very intimate experience.  
**Jan** (Deadly serious) Yes and wasn't it fantastic? We must do it again.  
**Brad** Amanda! Get serious. We were trying a bit of how's y'father in *front* of your father. Your entire family had front row seats.  
**Amanda** (She's purring) Hmmm. I like performing.  
**Brad** (He's confused) You what?!  
**Amanda** Come on, you loved it. Admit it. You *loved* it.  
**Brad** It was exciting all right, but I'm too young to have a heart attack.  
**Amanda** (Pats settee) Come here, you. (BRAD checks his script then sits next to her)  
**Brad** You know, you are a very dangerous lady.  
**Amanda** Tell me you liked it. Come on, tell me. What was the best bit?  
**Brad** (Smiles. Sighs) Well I've gotta admit one thing. It sure was different.  
**Amanda** Don't look now but I think your enthusiasm's showing.  
**Brad** (Looks at script then at AMANDA then adjusts his jeans) Oh hell.  
**Amanda** Did you see the look on Jan and Kirsten's faces? They were spewing.  
**Brad** I saw the look on your father's face. I've definitely blown it with him.  
**Amanda** (Cuddling) Just so long as you haven't blown it with me.  
**Brad** God, you are insatiable.  
**Amanda** Mmmm and ain't life grand?  
**Brad** Mind you, it did have its funny side. I thought you were going to wet yourself when we started laughing.  
**Amanda** (Amused) I did.  
**Brad** What? What do you mean?  
**Amanda** That's the effect you have on me, sexy.  
**Brad** Phew. I'm getting all tingly and .... (Turns page) Well it smells great, whatever it is.  
(Pause. Both actors know this is wrong. She nods slightly at script. BRAD has turned over two pages. He flicks one back)  
**Brad** Ah, I'm getting all tingly and turned on again.  
**Amanda** Fancy a quick trip to the conservatory?  
**Brad** No!  
**Amanda** (Hurt) No?  
**Brad** I mean, fair go, baby. Once was pushing our luck, twice, well ...  
(KIRSTEN enters and gongs a small dinner gong)

**Amanda** Saved by the bell.  
**Kirsten** Dinner is served. *(To couple on settee)* Sorry to break up the party.  
**Amanda** There's something funny going on here.  
**Kirsten** Yes. It's Brad. He's still got his jeans on. You're losing your touch, sister. *(She exits back to kitchen)*  
**Amanda** *(Stroking BRAD)* Now would you say I'm losing my touch?  
**Brad** Ah, no. And I'm never gonna live this down.  
**Amanda** *(Gives up the seduction routine. Offended)* Oh I might have known. Trust a man to put his ego first.  
**Brad** No, Amanda. I didn't mean that.  
**Amanda** *(Rising, goes behind settee. Thinking aloud)* Kirsten's planning some scheme. She's cooking up some scam.  
**Brad** I don't like Spam. *(AMANDA whacks him)* Ow!  
**Amanda** *(From behind BRAD, in his ear)* Well come on. The sooner we eat the sooner we can get back to the main event.  
**Jan** *(Enters DR refreshed)* Not interrupting anything am I? *(AMANDA pulls back and gives false smile)* Brad, there's something wrong.  
**Brad** Sorry?  
**Jan** You're fully dressed.  
**Amanda** We were just discussing Kirsten and her funny behaviour. What's going on?  
**Jan** I don't know. You tell me.  
**Kirsten** *(Enters with serviettes, cutlery and bowl of nuts)* Right, folks. First course is about to be served.  
**Brad** Great. I'm starving.  
**Kirsten** *(Heading DL)* Over here. It's a la casual but I'm sure the food will be fantastic. *(OTHERS follow. They nibble on the nibbles)*  
**Jan** Amanda was just commenting on your new-found culinary interests.  
**Kirsten** *(Putting serviettes on side table)* Me? Cooking? Don't be mad. I'm just helping Rosa relax after that dreadful man was rude to her.  
**Amanda** And after she was rude to Dad.  
**Kirsten** Oh yes. The guy abusing her was bad enough but when she discovered she'd called Dad a schmuck, well, you should have seen her face.  
**Brad** I wish I could swear in another language.  
*(They sit DL. BRAD stands waiting to be asked)*  
**Jan** Come on, Brad. You can sit next to me. I'm the only one you haven't undressed for – yet. *(OTHERS amused. Not BRAD)*  
**Brad** *(Sitting)* Can we give the Brad and his jeans routine a rest, please?  
**Others** Ohhh. *(Generally tease him).*  
**Tim** *(Enters, dried off but with slicked hair)* Right. We're not having one of father's famous barbies, so what are we having?  
**Kirsten** I'll just go and check with Rosa. *(Exits)* Just talk among yourselves.  
**Tim** *(Joining the group DL)* Brad. Jeans on I see.  
**Amanda** Dad. Can we skip the jokes about Brad and his jeans?  
**Tim** It's not a joke. I'm jealous. Now, where's the wine list?  
**Jan** It's all coming courtesy of Rosa and Kirsten.  
**Tim** Kirsten! What's she doing in the kitchen?

**Amanda** Nothing, we hope. She failed boiling water.  
**Jan** And listen. Go easy with Rosa. She's very upset about the phone calls.  
**Tim** Yeah well it looks like that moron's disappeared.  
**Jan** Especially since the call when she finished up abusing you.  
**Tim** Didn't upset me. Most of it was in Spanish. For all I know, she could have been calling me a sweet and wonderful bloke.

**Amanda** You said you knew a little Spanish.  
**Tim** *(Finger to lips)* Shhhh.  
**Jan** In fact don't even mention it. The less said the better. Oh but you can talk about her cooking.  
**Tim** What's wrong with her cooking?  
**Jan** Nothing. That's the point. But if you rave about the meal she'll feel better and it'll take her mind off the phone calls.  
**Tim** Got it. Don't talk about the creep on the phone.  
**Brad** But that was you, Tim.  
*(This goes over like a lead balloon. BRAD embarrassed)*  
**Tim** But *do* go overboard about the food.  
**Amanda** Here they come.  
**Kirsten** *(Opens and holds door)* Dah-dah!  
*(ROSA enters pushing a mobile food trolley. She heads DL with KIRSTEN almost excited tagging along)*

**Rosa** I am sorry to be so long but today I have had a few problems.  
**Tim** Yes, Rosa we know ...  
**Jan** *(Interrupting TIM)* Rosa, we're starving. What's on your delicious menu tonight.  
**Kirsten** You'll love it. You're going to have gourmet eating at its finest.  
**Amanda** What, have you tried it already? Trust you, garbage guts.  
**Kirsten** Ah, maybe just a quick bite.  
**Jan** So that's why you've been helping Rosa in the kitchen.  
**Kirsten** I haven't been helping. I've just been there having a chat. Haven't I Rosa?  
**Rosa** You have been having some chat, that is true.  
**Brad** Well it smells great, whatever it is. *(This time he gets the line right)*  
**Rosa** Kirsten if you could pass me the plates, maybe I could serve the food.  
**Kirsten** Oh sure. *(Takes pile of plastic plates and hands them to ROSA)* Here we are.  
**Rosa** One at a time, please.  
*(Laughter. KIRSTEN upset. AMANDA teases her sister)*

**Amanda** Good one, Kirst. We can see you know a lot about matters domestic.  
**Kirsten** *(Nasty)* Shut up.  
**Tim** Hey, hey, hey. That's enough of that.  
**Kirsten** Well I'm sick of you all having a go at my efforts around the house. You're always picking on me. You're always having a laugh.  
**Amanda** We only say it 'cos it's true.  
**Tim** All right, that's enough. *(Pause. Awkward silence)*  
**Brad** I'm a bit of an idiot .... *(Turns pages)* when it comes to doing things around the house.

**Jan** Except dropping your daks. *(This breaks the tension)*  
*(ROSA serves food onto plate and hands it to JAN)*

**Rosa** Maybe it is time to eat.

**Jan** Thank you, Rosa. You're right again and this looks magnificent.

**Tim** What is it?

**Rosa** *(Serving another plate)* Ah, maybe you should try it first and then have a guess.

**Amanda** *(Taking plate)* Thanks Rosa. It certainly looks ... unusual.

**Kirsten** Maybe Rosa's tried out a new dish. Maybe she's showing her true versatility.

**Tim** Well my barbecue's been washed out but I'm sure you've come up with something special, Rosa *(Takes plate)* Thanks. You always do. Your cooking is legendary.

**Jan** *(Aside)* Yes, all right. Not too much. *(TIM shrugs and eats)*

**Brad** I've heard so much about your cooking, Rosa. I feel kinda honoured just to be here let alone taste it.

**Amanda** Well come on, take it. *(BRAD takes plate, smiles and nods juggling script)*  
We can't wait all night.

**Jan** Don't forget yourself, Rosa. *(ROSA serves herself)*

**Kirsten** Okay, away you go. Get stuck in.

**Amanda** But *you* haven't got any. Don't tell me you're back on that starvation kick?

**Kirsten** Ah, no, it's just that I'm not real hungry. *(Others react. This is not like KIRSTEN)* Okay, okay. Just a small serve, please Rosa.  
*(ROSA serves KIRSTEN)*

**Tim** Where's the wine?

**Kirsten** Oh sorry. It's in the kitchen. I'll be right back.

**Tim** No leave it. I'll get some from the cellar.

**Kirsten** *(Miffed)* Why? I can get some from the kitchen. Don't you trust me?

**Tim** Of course I trust you. It's just that I've got bottles downstairs which need drinking. Let's eat first. C'mon. Two four, six, eight and all that.  
*(ROSA may sit but KIRSTEN may remain standing. Everyone is eating. They use a fork and eat a pasta type dish. Much of the following dialogue is spoken with mouths full or partly full. BRAD has script on lap. KIRSTEN is looking at others waiting for a response. Awkward pause)*

**Brad** Hmm. Yum.

**Tim** Yes. What is this?

**Jan** I think this is something new, Rosa. I can't remember you cooking this before.

**Rosa** No, you are correct. I have definitely not cooked this ... before.

**Amanda** It's got a lot of, um, ... I think it's garlic ....

**Kirsten** Yeah but just enough.

**Amanda** It's different though, I'll say that.

**Kirsten** Yes all right. It's new, it's different and it's got garlic but what do you think of it?

**Tim** *(At KIRSTEN)* Why? Are you a food critic now?

**Kirsten** Well if Rosa's tried something new, I think we should tell her what we think of it. You'd like to hear wouldn't you, Rosa?

**Rosa** I suppose.

**Jan** Well we all know that everything Rosa cooks is fabulous.

**Tim** Yes, Rosa, we never get tired of raving about your cooking.

**Brad** I've never tasted anything like this before. (*KIRSTEN despairs*)

**Amanda** Rosa, I hope you won't take this personally but even after today's events and ...

**Jan** Mandy. Not now. We agreed not to mention the business with the phone calls.

**Rosa** No, please, it is okay. I am over my troubles this afternoon.

**Jan** Are you sure?

**Rosa** I am sure. It is all behind me now. (*OTHERS pleased*)

**Tim** (*Teasing*) Really? I mean do you really want to live and work in the house of a criminal?

**Kirsten** Dad!

**Jan** Tim. It's no laughing matter.

**Rosa** (*ROSA embarrassed*) Oh, Mister Grey, I cannot tell you. I am so embarrassed.

**Tim** (*Continues ribbing ROSA*) Of a monster? Of a gilipollas cojudo! (*ROSA is horrified*) Sorry, my dear Rosa but you forget I have a Spanish speaking salesman. Remember? (*TIM laughs and teases ROSA*)

**Rosa** (*Shaking head in embarrassment*) Ohhh.  
(*OTHERS – not KIRSTEN – amused and relieved*)

**Jan** You must teach me, Rosa. I need some new expressions to beat him about the head with. (*More amusement*)

**Rosa** Oh no, you must never speak those words, never ever. They are very bad words which I am ashamed to speak. Please.

**Tim** It's okay. It's over. We've all had a fright but now it's finished. Rosa. Listen to me. Forget what has happened. Okay?

**Rosa** (*Nods*) Okay.

**Kirsten** (*Angry*) Look could we please get back to the subject in hand. (*Awkward pause. Silence. All look at KIRSTEN*) We were discussing the merits of tonight's meal. And so much for the agreement not to talk about those filthy phone calls in front of Rosa.  
(*KIRSTEN'S venom shocks everyone. Awkward silence*)

**Tim** Yes, okay, Kirsten. Stay calm.

**Brad** Well I just think it's great that Rosa can laugh about it.

**Kirsten** Oh shut up, Brad. Just stick to the undressing.

**Jan** (*Shocked*) Kirsten!

**Amanda** (*Attacks her sister*) That's right. Let it all out. Little Miss Jealousy.

**Kirsten** Jealous! Of you! You're a joke!

**Tim** Okay, that's enough. I'm sick of you two mouthing off at each other. You're supposed to be bloody adults. Now why don't you try acting like one. (*Pause. Things settle*) Starting with an apology.

**Kirsten** (*Mumbles*) Sorry, Brad.

**Amanda** (*Equally mumbled*) Yeah. Sorry, Brad.

**Tim** Now, how about changing the subject?

**Amanda** *(Changes tack)* You know, Rosa, about this meal. There's something I really ought to say.

**FX** *Phone rings.*

**Jan** Oh my God. It's him.

**Tim** Jan, don't be ridiculous. That other business is over. It could be anyone. *(Rising)* Just stay calm. *(TIM crosses to phone. Everyone frozen, watches in awe. TIM picks up phone and speaks)*

**Tim** Hello. *(The FX continues. This is not meant to happen and TIM is thrown)* Hello. *(Phone keeps ringing. TIM loud)* Hello! *(Phone stops ringing)* Who? ... Say that again. ... No, you've got the wrong number. *(TIM hangs up and heads back to OTHERS)* Wrong number.

**Jan** Are you sure? Was it a man? Did you recognise the voice?

**Tim** Yes. No. I mean I didn't recognise the voice and yes, I am sure. It wasn't our maniac. He wanted Carlos .... Loopydoz or someone.

**Rosa** *(Stunned)* Lopendez!

**Tim** Something like that. I couldn't understand him.

**Rosa** That is my mother's cousin's maiden name! *(Everyone stunned perhaps more by ROSA'S anxiety)*

**Tim** Rosa. Please. It was a wrong number.

**Jan** It was him!

**Tim** Jan! Take it easy. It could have been anyone!

**Rosa** *(Distressed)* This is terrible. That man is trying to hurt me.

**Tim** No, Rosa. It's not you. It's me. I'm the one who upset him. I'm the one he wants to get back at. But even so, that wasn't him!

**Kirsten** I don't suppose anyone wants seconds? *(Ignored)*

**Jan** Ring the police, Tim. Tell them we've had another call.

**Amanda** But have we? I mean you don't suppose we're mistaken? *(They look at her)* I mean, Dad heard the name okay and it really was a wrong number?

**Tim** Exactly. We're really drawing a long bow here. Look, the bloke had a very thick accent. And Rosa, I mean your mother's cousin, well ....

**Jan** Maybe we're so jumpy we jumped to the wrong conclusion.

**Brad** Things are never like this at my place. *(Ignored)*

**Kirsten** Look, let's not let this spoil our meal. Amanda.

**Amanda** What?

**Kirsten** You were about to tell us something about tonight's cuisine.

**Amanda** I was? Oh yes, I was. But I don't want to upset you, Rosa.

**Kirsten** Why would you upset her?

**Rosa** It is okay. I was perhaps wrong before. The man on the phone was, I think, a wrong number. Come, Amanda? What will you say?

**Jan** Are you sure, Rosa? We can check this out for you.

**Rosa** No I am sure. I too am a little bit jumpy.

**Amanda** Well we know you've had a really rough afternoon.

**Kirsten** We know that, Mandy. We've finished with the phone calls. Now let's talk about the food.

**Amanda** Okay. I'll say exactly what I think. Rosa, it's good you're sitting down.

**FX** *Explosion in kitchen. Everyone shocked*

**Tim** What was that?

**Rosa** The oven. It has exploded!

**Others** What!  
*(General panic. It is not a huge explosion but enough to cause concern)*

**Rosa** *(Rising)* The oven was not switched off and it has been making a noise.

**Tim** There might be a fire. *(More concern)*

**Rosa** No, it will be okay. You stay here and finish your meal. I know what has happened. I will fix it. *(She exits UR)*

**Brad** Can I do anything?

**Amanda** No, Brad. Leave it. Thanks.  
*(They settle but are concerned)*

**Jan** There's something wrong. She is obviously upset. Rosa would never leave the oven on like that.

**Kirsten** *(Feeling guilty)* She might.

**Tim** It has to be the stress. It's those bloody phone calls.

**Jan** Tim, we're *all* cut up. And that's just what that creep wants. Not to physically hurt us but to make us afraid. What we have to do is forget him, forget the phone calls and get back to our normal, everyday lives.

**Brad** So kitchen explosions are normal around here?  
*(OTHERS look at BRAD then laugh. This has relaxed the mood)*

**Tim** Nice one, Brad. Thanks.

**Amanda** Yes but it's not just the mess out there in the kitchen. There is something radically wrong with this food.

**Kirsten** What about the food? I think it's fine. This is Rosa's cooking at its best.  
*(OTHERS scoff. BRAD not so sure)*

**Jan** Kirsten, you can't be serious. Rosa is obviously upset. There has to be something wrong with your taste buds.

**Kirsten** No there's not. I like this ... whatever it is.

**Tim** Kirsten, this food is tasteless stodge. It's bland, it's overcooked, it's got beginner written all over it.

**Brad** I think it's okay.

**Amanda** You would. You live in a bachelor pad with a takeaway stomach.

**Tim** I can't believe Rosa prepared this meal.

**Jan** She obviously wasn't thinking. Kirsten, you were with her. Was she doing anything strange in the kitchen?

**Kirsten** Well, yes ... and no. I mean she wasn't doing her usual thing but then ...

**Amanda** What are you talking about?

**Kirsten** *(Annoyed. Gives in)* Oh, all right, I'll tell you. It was never going to work anyway.

**FX** *Thunder clap. Increase sound of rain.*

**Tim** Well aren't we glad we cancelled the barbecue?

**Jan** You were saying, Kirsten?

**Kirsten** Yes. I was. I am.

**FX** *(Phone rings)*

**Tim** *(TIM freezes. Pause)* Oh no! Not again.

**Jan** *(Rising, grabs TIM)* I'll get the phone. You go and check on Rosa.

**Tim** But it might be that moron.  
**Jan** And it might be my mother.  
**Tim** *(Softish)* Same thing.  
**Jan** *(Pushing him)* I heard that. Now just see what's happened in the kitchen.  
*(TIM heads to kitchen, JAN to phone)*  
**FX** *Lightning flash and lights suddenly cut. BLACKOUT. Dim lights are used for safety*  
*(Fear amongst group. Phone still ringing)*  
**Brad** The lights have blown.  
**Kirsten** Good one, Brad.  
**Tim** There's a torch over there. *(Meaning LC)*  
**Brad** I'll get it. *(He stumbles and falls knocking furniture)* Ow!  
**Amanda** Brad! Are you all right?  
**Brad** I think I've hurt my leg.  
**Kirsten** Well, quick, take your jeans off.  
**Amanda** Shut up, Kirsten!  
**FX** *Thunder clap*  
**Jan** I'll get the phone, Tim, go and check on Rosa. Just go!  
**Kirsten** I'll get the torch.  
**FX** *(LIGHTS RESTORED)*  
**Tim** *(At UR door)* Thank God for that. *(Opens door and smoke comes out)*  
Rosa! My God, the kitchen's on fire! *(Disappears inside)*  
**FX** *Burglar alarm sounds and keeps sounding.*  
**Amanda** *(Worried)* That's the alarm in the garden.  
**Kirsten** *(Very worried)* There's someone outside!  
**Tim** *(Racing back into room)* That's the alarm.  
**Jan** *(By the phone)* What about Rosa?  
**Tim** She's okay. She'd left a pot on the stove and it caught fire.  
**Kirsten** Not the dessert! *(Races to kitchen)* Rosa, not the dessert! *(Exits)*  
**Tim** *(To JAN)* Don't answer it. I'll do it. *(To BRAD)* Brad, race out the front and see if there's any vehicle in the driveway.  
**Brad** Right. *(Turns page. Moves UC)*  
**Tim** Get their rego. *(Goes to JAN and the phone)*  
**Brad** Okay! Leave it to me! *(He struggles with french windows)*  
**Amanda** You shouldn't answer the phone in a storm.  
**FX** *TIM picks up receiver. Phone stops ringing. Thunder clap*  
**Tim** *(Speaks into phone)* Could you hold the line please? *(Covers mouthpiece. BRAD has trouble opening door. It is stuck)*  
**Jan** Maybe Googie's just testing her alarm again.  
**Kirsten** *(Pokes head around door)* The bloody pudding's burnt to crisp. *(Exits)*  
**Tim** Amanda. Look out the conservatory and see if you can see anything.  
**Amanda** Okay. *(Exits LC)*  
**FX** *Thunder clap*  
*(BRAD has given up trying to get out the door so suddenly heads LC)*  
**Brad** *(ad lib)* Front door's jammed. I'll go this way. *(Heading LC)*  
**Tim** *(Into mouthpiece)* I'll be with you in just a minute. *(Covers mouthpiece again)*

## It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 44

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*(BRAD heading LC collides with AMANDA returning. She ad libs "Brad". He ad libs "Sorry" and they continue their journeys)*

**Amanda** *(Rushes back trembling)* There's someone in the garden. I think he's coming around the front.  
*(Everyone turns and looks upstage. BRAD enters UL and moves across to UR. He waves as he passes)*

**Jan** Answer the phone, Tim. It could be important.

**Tim** *(Into phone)* Hello? Hello? *(To OTHERS)* They've hung up.  
*(TIM hangs up)*

**Amanda** You'll have to call the police. Come on, Dad. Something's wrong.

**Jan** Do it, Tim.

**Tim** *(Puts phone to ear)* It's dead. The phone's dead.

**FX** *Phone rings (It should have been thunder)*

**Tim** *(Ad lib)* I think it's working again. *(Phone to ear)* Hello? ... They've gone.

**FX** *Thunder clap.*

**Amanda** Here's Brad.  
*(They turn to BRAD UC. Again the door is jammed and he is trying to get in)*

**Kirsten** *(Enters in panic)* We need a fire extinguisher.

**Tim** There's one in the laundry. *(KIRSTEN exits)*

**Brad** *(Breaks frame and imaginary glass in panel at side of french windows. Pokes head through)* There are two blokes in the front garden and one of them's got a gun! *(Panic)*

**Tim** A gun!

**FX** *Car horn (should have been a gunshot)*

**Tim** *(Ad lib)* It sounds like they're in a car.

**FX** *Train whistle (still can't program the gunshot)*

**Jan** *(Ad lib)* Or maybe they came by train.

**FX** *Alarm sound stops*

**Amanda** The alarm's stopped.

**FX** *Alarm starts again*

**Amanda** That means we're safe.

**Tim** No, it just cuts out after a certain time.

**FX** *Alarm stops*

**Brad** *(Still speaking through the set from upstage)* I think they also had rocks or stones or something. *(Causes distress. TIM moves LC cautiously)*

**Kirsten** *(Enters)* We can't work the fire extinguisher! We need help! *(Exits)*

**Brad** I can fix it! I can fix anything. *(BRAD breaks through set and exits to kitchen)*

**Tim** *(From LC)* You're right. Get down. They're going to throw something.  
*(Immediately TIM, AMANDA and JAN crouch in anticipation. Pause. Nothing)*

**Jan** *(Ad lib)* Maybe you were mistaken.

**FX** *Sound of breaking glass.*  
*(They scream and crouch even more)*

**Tim** *(First to look up. Ad lib)* I think the window stopped the rock.  
*(Pause. Suddenly basketball lobs in LC. It should have been a brick)*

**Amanda** *(Ad lib)* They're throwing basketballs.

**Brad** *(Enters)* Is the red extinguisher okay for electrical fires?

**FX** *Phone rings.*  
**Tim** Leave it. Let it ring.  
**Jan** Tim, it might be the police trying to contact us.  
**Brad** I'll get it. *(Goes to phone)*  
**FX** *Thunder clap.*  
**Kirsten** *(Enters) Brad! Quickly!*  
*(KIRSTEN goes to exit back into kitchen but the door jams. She pushes. Then beats on the door)*  
**Brad** *(Phone stops ringing. Answers phone) Hello? ... Ah, he's busy right now. Can I take a message?*  
**Tim** Who is it? *(BRAD holds up hand as stop sign as he listens)*  
**Kirsten** *(Beating more loudly. Ad lib) Rosa? Rosa? (More pushing and beating)*  
**FX** *Car horn followed by train whistle*  
**Brad** *(Hand over phone) They say you've been selected to win over two thousand dollars worth of food and wine from various restaurants.*  
**Kirsten** *(Desperate beating on door) Rosa!!!*  
**Jan** Hang up, Brad and then call the police.  
**Tim** No, take their number. Tell them I'll call back.  
*(Kitchen door opens and smoke comes out. KIRSTEN coughs and waves the air then exits into kitchen)*  
**Amanda** Dad, the kitchen's on fire. Dad!  
**FX** *Voice on loud hailer. "Attention, you in the house. This is the police."*  
**Tim** The police!  
**Brad** *(Into phone) Can we call you back?*  
**Kirsten** *(Enters with two buckets) This was all we could find!*  
**FX** *Sound of machine gun firing (should be thunder clap)*  
**Amanda** Brad, help Kirsten!  
*(BRAD replaces phone and takes one bucket)*  
**FX** *Voice on loud hailer. "Attention, you in the house. This is the police."*  
**Jan** We need to get outside. The police think we're the burglars. Come on.  
*(JAN heads upstage to french windows)*  
**Tim** No, Jan. It might be a trap! *(JAN struggles with doors)*  
**Rosa** *(Enters looking dishevelled. Speaks with normal voice – no accent) Call the real fire brigade! The bloody smoke machine's blown up!*  
**FX** *Smoke from UR comes in more liberal doses*  
**Jan** *(Furious with jammed doors. Now as herself) Bloody doors! I'll kill whoever built this set!*  
*(JAN pulls at french windows and one door comes away)*  
**FX** *The song The Laughing Policeman starts playing and continues*  
*(TIM rushes up stage and points to kitchen)*  
**Tim** In there, throw it in there.  
**Brad** I've got it!  
*(BRAD runs towards kitchen and heaves bucket of water which was used in the panto last show, and a shower of confetti goes all over TIM. The drama has become a farce and the actors have lost control. Smoke billows from UR. Chaos reigns. It's no use pretending, it's true that it'll be all wrong on the night. The actors have crashed through the fourth wall as well as the set. KIRSTEN heaves the second bucket of confetti over the others.)*

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*Parts of the set are “moved” at random. JAN pulls the french window apart. AMANDA throws cushions and the others return fire. The chaos happens as The Laughing Policeman song slowly increases in volume. Allow the mayhem to continue a wee while then drop the curtain as the festivities are in full swing. You could have a medley of sound effects as follows)*

### **FX**

*(overlapping)*

*Voice on loud hailer. “Attention, you in the house. This is the police.”*

*Burglar alarm*

*Phone ringing*

*Glass breaking*

*Thunder clap*

*Car horn*

*Train whistle*

### **Curtain**

*(Just how the curtain calls are taken depends on the state of your set and the appearance of your actors)*

## **Rehearsal Material and Performing Rights**

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